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The BYSTANDER

XMAS Nº 1927

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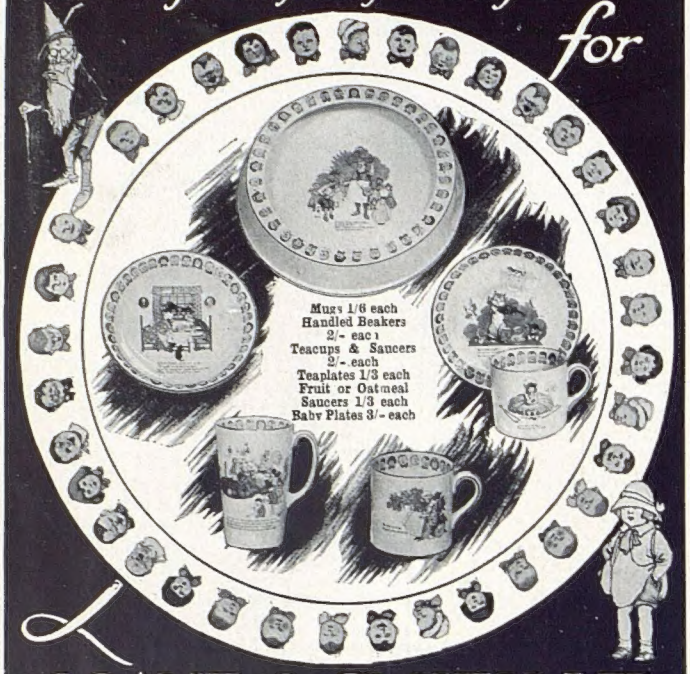

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Vol. XCVI.—No. 124 A

The BYSTANDER

CHRISTMAS NO.

BY E. HARDING

To Our Readers—Greetings!

And "May your shadow never grow less"

Helping himself to good health.....

He knows what's good! Mother knows, too, that HOVIS is, of all breads, the most nourishing and delicious. It contains the LIFE and heart of the wheat. It builds bone and muscle. No other bread is so rich in the health-giving vitamins as well as in Phosphates which feed brain and nerves. And so digestible, too!

TO HOUSEWIVES:

There is 25% of **added** wheat-germ in HOVIS—a quarter of its entire bulk. Let your next loaf be HOVIS, but for your own satisfaction, be sure it is HOVIS.

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Nourishing—and Nice

BEST BAKERS BAKE IT

HOVIS LTD. LONDON & MACCLESFIELD

TABEH TOEAN

By VENNETTE HERRON

(Author of "Peacocks," "Fulfilment," "Perfume and Poison," etc.)

Illustrations by STEVEN SPURRIER

"BEASTLY business, unpacking!" Richard Westcott mopped his brow, and glowered at the litter all about him . . . Books dumped down anywhere—tennis-rackets—hopeless heaps of clothing—riding-boots kicked into a corner—photograph of a blonde, handsome woman atop a pile of cushions balanced upon a tabouret. . . . And she loathed lolling, his mother! "How can you be so untidy, darling?" Out of measureless distance her voice came close—caught at his throat. . . . Home was in another world!

"Where the devil's that boy Tommy promised to send? Sitting snug at the club—forgetting all about me, slaving and sweltering—that's Tommy! Will I like Java?" He stared out at the Koningsplein—a long, hot avenue of trees, bordered by twin ribbons of macadam, shrouded in silver dust . . . This in the morning. Tipped-up carts tinkling past—sleekly purring motor cars, each in its own white cloud—no one he knew in any of them. Of course there was Tommy—and a few other fellows belonging to the Company . . . But it was jolly lonely sometimes—especially when one spoke no Dutch All new though—gloriously new! . . . And there was that feeling of adventure waiting—just round the corner . . . And that other feeling of not caring what it might be—of nothing mattering much . . . Heat — content — fate . . . To lie in the shade of a bush, and dream of greatness . . . And muddled up with it all the determination to let none of this get him—to carry on and make good—to be master of the swimming, surfeiting, quicksand tropical abundance, which so often sucked weaker men under. Beautifully boyish, Dick Westcott—with fringed innocent lashes . . . Women always yearned to cuddle his head.

"Tabeh, toean."

East greeting West, with that word which means both hail and farewell. Soft, slurring, seductive, like the heavy, hazy, sun-soaked air . . . Perfumed breezes, provoking sweetly perverse longings—not to do, but to be—to lie quiescent, ripening—like a fruit on a bough, or a flower on its stalk . . . Both blossomed into fullness without effort—why not man? Treacherous thoughts—never to be yielded to, of course. Dick shook the sweat from his eyes, dropped the lid of an emptied box and, still kneeling, looked up.

"Apa toean maoe . . . Does my lord require a housekeeper?" The tone suggested rather than enquired. Pretty—the *Passar-Melajoe*—common language in a land of many tongues . . . Caressing somehow—and so simple! Already—and he'd only been out a fortnight—Dick understood a lot.

Framed in the doorway, she waited—a bronze silhouette against a brassy glare. Tiny as a half-grown child, yet plainly woman . . . Wee hands and feet . . . Grave, perfectly poised, at rest, assured—no nervous giggling here!

"Framed in the doorway, she waited—a bronze silhouette against a brassy glare"

. . . Dick was swept by a sudden sense of the hideous vulgarity of self-conscious laughter and shifting red arms. But then it would have been easy to send her away; whereas . . . There was something poignant and exquisite in that patient serenity.

"Saja nama'nja Samira—My name is Samira; I stay with you." The figurine advanced a few steps out of the blinding brightness into the but semi-diluted light of the still uncurtained, two-roomed, stucco pavilion, and Dick could not but see how finely she was formed . . . The clean lines of her hips, tightly swathed in a golden, green-birded *sarong*—firm budding breasts, bound in white muslin, clearly visible beneath the veiling of a rose-gauze, sovereign-clasped *badjoe*—delicious infantile curve of dark amber-hued throat below her little round head . . . Ebony hair, polished as Chinese lacquer, brushed straight back from the calm brow into a trim bun, held by quaint silver pins, at the nape of her neck . . . Melting, velvet-brown eyes under two suave black crescents. . . . Nose a bit flat

undeniably—but so small—so piquant! . . . Lips full and dusky red—cheeks metal-smooth and faintly powdered—the nails of tapering fingers and infinitesimal toes neatly tended. Exuding from her an unknown but far from unpleasant fragrance. Product of a practical mother, who had studied the wants of white men, Samira.

"No idea they were so damned attractive, these native girls!" Thus Dick to himself, while involuntarily summing her charms. "Though it's true I've heard. . . . Makes the filthy place look different somehow—just by standing there! And dropping in like that—out of nowhere. . . . Very likely it's the custom here. . . . But it wouldn't do, of course!" And then to her: "No, I don't want a housekeeper." This sternly—vocabulary faltering, but not his heroism. "I'm going to eat at the club; and I've a boy—coming to-morrow."

"*Djongos tida baik*—boy no good! He never know to make *toean* comfortable—but *I* know! . . . And here is so much to do!" Her eyes took in the tumbled volumes on the floor—disarray of garments over higgledy-piggeldy wicker chairs—fresh-purchased, crumpled *sarongs*, unfolded with some vague idea of decoration, only to be tossed aside—all the confusion of a bachelor's undirected moving-in. "*Toean* just come to this house?"

"Yesterday." Dick grinned. "And I've got to show up at the office on Monday."

"Three days—*talaloe banjak tiempo*—too much time! I make everything finish in one day—you see! That where *toean* sleep?" Without pausing for reply, she attacked the nearest jumble, and trotted toward the adjoining room with a mountain of heterogeneous articles toppling above her jet ball of a head.

"I say, you mustn't do that!" Dick had never seen a maid in his mother's house bearing anything weightier than a feather-duster; and this—"No bigger than a doll, and carting all that rubbish—great Scot! Here, let me!"

But Samira snapped her eyes at him like an indignant mother-bird, interrupted while building its nest. "I am a woman, and I know what to do," she stated stiffly. "Men never know."

Dick chuckled. "But see here . . ."

"I am my lord's slave—kindly step out of my way!" She whisked past him, and disappeared through the open door.

"But you can't stay! . . ."

"I help to-day." Back already for another load. "Can the *toean* say that he does not need me?" This with a flash of gentle scorn.

"But, my good creature!"—or words to that effect.

"*Ja?* The *toean* has but to command." Her hands busy among his possessions, like those of a little girl absorbed with toy dishes. "Where will we have this picture? I put it here, yes? No—no, that must go there! A very great lord, my *toean*—but stupid about things like these! Sit only in the long chair—smoke cigarette, and watch. I make all ready—soon my lord will see." Scurrying importantly—small bare feet pattering. "That dirt? Poof—under the rug! And the dust—so!" With a mouth like a kiss, she blew it away. And how she did laugh—gleefully, naturally—with a gleam of white teeth, set in shadowed carmine. Could he do aught but laugh with her? . . . It was all like a play.

Mid-afternoon, and incredibly everything seemingly done. Iron bed draped with a *klamboe* of white net and made up with fresh linen—only one sheet, with a folded blanket at the foot, a fat pillow at the head, and a *goeling*, like a long cotton sausage, stretched lengthwise down the middle. Dick's clothing hanging on pegs behind tacked-up cretonne—brushes and shaving-kit spread conveniently upon the top of a towel-covered trunk. In the miniature *salon* tables primly placed—books upon shelves—cups and saucers stacked in the atrocious little glass coffin standing upon four legs, which usually protects tea-things in the Dutch colonies—*sarongs* softening the white-washed walls.

"But there's one thing more!" Thus Samira—darting into the garden like a swallow—back again in a second, with a handful of mixed flowers—orange marigolds, purple passion-blooms, rambler roses . . . cramming them all together into a glass—contriving to make them look picturesque, though no one else could. "There!" With a sigh of satisfaction. "Is my lord pleased?"

Nothing was arranged as a European woman would have had it—all was sketchy, perhaps not over-clean; but compared with early morning—why, home was here! . . . And like the vast majority of men, Dick had a sentiment for home, without much artistic sense about houses. "It's a miracle!" he praised—as well as he could in Malay—very well with his eyes.

"And now my lord's tea!" From a mysterious little detached cubby-hole at the far end of the back verandah she brought a steaming pot; then produced, as if by magic, from a twist in her *slendang*, several cakes of chopped coconut, mixed with brown-sugar syrup, the famed *goeladjava*.

"But you must take some too!" Just a grateful boy, in an uncharted, enchanted country, he couldn't look upon this fluttering brown butterfly as a servant. "Bring a cup for yourself!"

She regarded him with wide eyes. "But I may not eat with my lord!"

"Nonsense!" He caught her by one wrist—laughing, forced a bit of his own cake into her mouth. Jolly country, Java—he was going to like it!

"Oh, *toean*!" Dark eyes downcast—copper-crimson cheeks dewy . . .

"He . . . forced a bit of his own cake into her mouth"

"I go now to fetch my things—*kombali lekas*—quickly here again."

"But you can't sleep here—there's no place!"

"I bring my mat—sleep before my lord's door."

"Oh hell—you musn't! . . .

"In one hour I am back. *Tabeh, toean.*"

Tabeh, toean—tabeh, toean . . . Like twitter of birds in spring—like spatter of cool fountain spray—like an echo of something lost, soon to be refound. Tiny brown feet scampering away . . . Only to return. An hour can be very long!

Blackness . . . Stars bursting through molten steel mist . . . Night-time scent of wax-white bells . . . little lights of vendors flickering under the low shadow of the trees . . . Far off a whining flute.

"*Tabeh, toean.*" Submissive, suggesting, promising—East welcoming West with the one word which means both hail and farewell.

. . . . . .

Five years later.

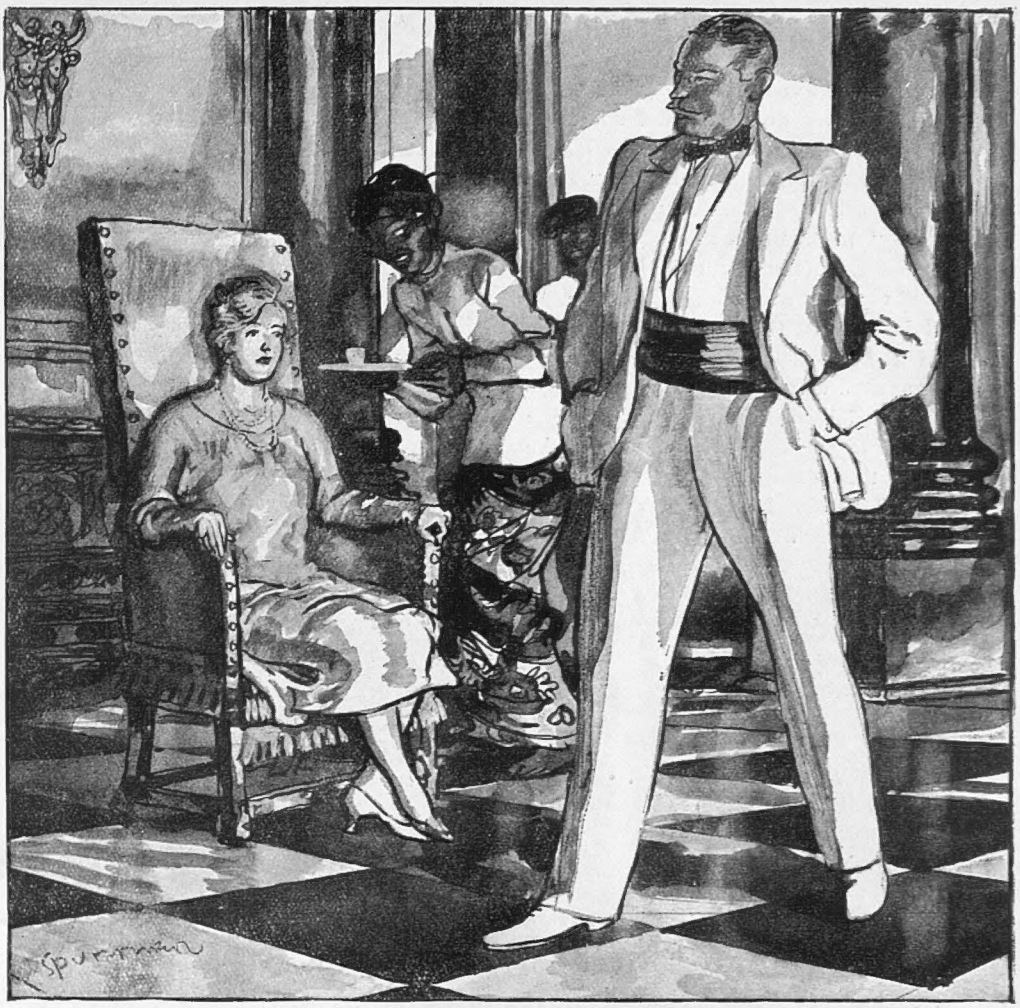
"And so my lord's need of me is over, and he would send me away—is that what he would say?"

"Please, Samira—don't make it difficult!" Appearing rather more than five years older, Dick Westcott—no longer a boy, but successful . . . No one could say that Java had hurt him, surely . . . His faraway mother was very proud. For in spite of the girl, he hadn't drifted—hadn't let her disturb the real stuff of his dreams . . . And the good-natured shrugs of his comrades had only egged him on to prove . . . Promotion after promotion, until . . . But the process and swift realisation of ambition had hardened him somewhat—had aged the eyes under the still sweeping lashes. Not much, of course . . . Only—well, full man now—with a man's needs, which the picnic pavilion could no longer fill.

"I didn't ask you to come to me, you know, Samira——" Voice patient—all very reasonable and true—"you just came. And I never pretended to—er—really love you—did I? And you must have known always that some day I'd have to marry . . ."

"Yes, that is what white men always do. But why—why? Will she serve you any better than I? Will she teach you more ways of loving? Will she live for you alone, even as I? Of course, she may give you a son; but I could have done that too—only you——"

"Hush, Samira! Can't you understand?" . . . How to explain—to make her see what it meant to him now—to his career! . . . Suitable establishment and honourable children. . . Companionship with a woman of his own kind—one whom he could present with pride to the world. . . And all the things that others stood for—to have those things again in his life. . . Fair damask and crystal upon his board—trained servants and prosperous conventions. . . To preside as host among people of importance. . . Couldn't she see that he'd gone beyond play-kisses and laughter and the light but lion-strong passion which takes no count of place or time—that now, if ever, he must put aside the irresponsibility of youth and sit down solidly to a man's secure and probably—yes, certainly more satisfying existence.



"Queer how this coming back—this moving-in reminded him . . ."

And the woman whom he was about to wed—high-born, pretty—in her large and rather placid way—daughter of one of the most prominent Dutch officials—marked the measure of his achievement. And how she adored him, his Adeline! . . . Her eyes were pathetic as those of a cow, whenever they rested upon him. Hell, what a comparison! . . . But—well, they were! However, he loved her—she was exactly what he wanted. "You must see, Samira, that I can't go on always like this!"

"I know—thou art a *toean besar*, and must have a great house and many boys to do thy bidding—and three motor cars, like the lord-father of the lady whom thou wilt make thy wife. . . But might I not just stay near—that is so little to ask!—in some small corner of thy compound? I could still mend the clothing—the *nonja blanda* would never do that! And I could watch thee pass through thy garden—and kneel sometimes to kiss thy footsteps in the grass. Grant this only, lord, and I will ask no more." Humbly—oh, humbly. Tearless her eyes, yet two wells of sorrow.

To be loved like that! "Nonsense, Samira!" Tone on edge now. Damn it all, why must she touch him so? . . . Why couldn't she grasp the situation, and go off quietly, like a sensible soul? . . . After all, she must have had experience before!—As for keeping her on in his house—preposterous! Even without an idiotic risk like that. . . He'd heard tales of tragedies which sometimes followed the dismissing and supplanting of these Javanese girls. . . Queer stories—of slow subtle poisons, which made men blind, or drove them crazy—or brought sudden, inexplicable death to their innocent wives. Not that he credited such wild-cat yarns! . . . Still it was as well perhaps that he'd accepted that temporary transfer to Sumatra—and that he hadn't mentioned the circumstances to Samira. Get off directly after the wedding, and she'd never know where. . . "Poor little devil—she does look cut up! . . . And she's been wonderfully sweet!" If she'd only go peacefully, he'd be very generous. . . He could afford to be now. Dash it all, not so easy, even for himself, at this last moment! But he'd taken the road toward the top, and

wasn't going to turn back after all! "Come, Samira—kiss me, and say good-bye, like a dear little girl."

She did not weep—she did not draw near. Level-eyed and cold—no longer suppliant, she looked at him. "Thou art my first lover, and my last!" she said. "And thou art mine! Day after day I have made thee so! I have prepared thy food—I have cradled thy sleep—I have given thee my heart to drink, and I have drunk from thine. . . Go where thou wilt, thou canst never escape from me! Didst think, in thy white man's arrogance, to come here, to take what thou wouldst, and scatheless depart? Didst fancy me ignorant of those secrets which all mothers teach their daughters in this, my land? If often I am silent, that but means that I know the more. In the link called love thou canst not cheat me! I could keep thee now, if I would—but I will not! Go—go to Medan! . . . Oh, yes, there is naught about thee or thy plans that is concealed from me. . . Go only—to learn the futility of thy white man's folly—to learn the potency of the cup we have drained together! Wherever thou art, forever and forever, thou wilt hear me calling—and thy nights will be dry as dust until thou answer me! And though it may be months, or it may be years, one day thou wilt return—to leave me no more! . . . For in the end Samira keeps her own!"

Unnerving rather. . . . Spoken so simply—so softly . . . Words running together like a swift, relentless river. Silence for a second; and then: "I go now—*tabeh, toean.*"

Well, it was over! . . . The doorway empty—grey twilight flooding in.

Tabeh, toean — tabeh, toean. . . . Echo of lost joy, never to be recaptured. . . . Chill as patter of wet leaves in autumn—venomous as the hiss of a swollen cobra above a desecrated altar—pregnant with insolent, age-old, unconquerable power—power of passion and will over thought and purpose. *Tabeh, toean.* . . . Threatening—prophetic—in defeat triumphant. . . . This the forced, first farewell of East to West.

. . . . . .

Another three years gone by.

Back from Sumatra—again in Batavia.

"The trees gave her up, and she was there again . . . Almost he could reach her—but not quite"

. . . On the Koningsplein, too—but not in the small pavilion now—ah, no! . . . In a great, tall-pillared, marble-floored house, with twin pavilions of its own and a huge garage and a garden as big as a park. For ever climbing, Dick Westcott—now near the peak. One year more, and he'd likely be made *chef* of the whole Eastern Branch—not bad for a man of thirty! Lines of grey in his hair—lines under his eyes—others dropping from nose to mouth . . . But did that matter? He was successful, wasn't he?

Standing uncertain on the marble tiles—confusion all about him—but of an ordered kind. Servants—many of them—wearily keeping at their tasks. . . . Kept at them by a large—very large now—and placid woman, holding the household reins in plump, capable hands.

"Why don't you go out somewhere for dinner, dear? . . . The unpacking's nearly finished; but, of course, the furniture can't be properly placed before to-morrow . . . You'd find it more agreeable, wouldn't you?"

"You don't care to come too?" Very courteously. Queer how this coming back—this moving-in reminded him . . .

"Oh, no; I'm much too tired . . . I'll just speak with nurse about arrangements for the children, and then have them serve me a little something in my room . . . But you go! . . . All this is woman's work, and you'll be better away."

Who was it had said something similar once—only different? "You sit in chair, smoke cigarette, and watch." . . . But she hadn't wanted him away! "Oh, I'll hunt up old Tommy. . . . Don't wait for me—I may be a bit late. . . . Er — good-night, Adeline." Peck of a kiss upon her brow.

"Good-night, Dick." Absently—her eyes on the plates a boy was just removing from a near-by chest.

He'd thought it might be amusing—hoped so, anyway; but it was dull really—like most things in the world . . . Dinner at the club with a few old cronies—at least they had been cronies once; but he'd been away so long . . . Fat and puffy, some of 'em—fever-racked, others—new interests all around . . . Eyes of envy, if they hadn't gone as far—patronising pats, if they'd gone farther than he . . . Though not many of them had done that—ahem!

And still, what was it all worth — actually? "*B'renti* — stop!" This to the chauffeur who was driving him home. He didn't want to go home yet—and he didn't want to talk to anyone . . . He wanted—well, just for a brief space, to — sort of review things—to—why not be honest with himself?—to remember. He hadn't wanted to—those several years in Sumatra; but now suddenly he did. "I'll get out and walk—that's all, Arjo; *poelang sadja.*"

Strolling along the avenue under the arching trees . . . The broad footpath down the centre lined with tall trunks—outside of these, upon either hand, two roads, white under the moon as two tranquil streams . . . Spreading branches overhead, shutting out the sky—blossoming, some of them—heavy, smothering, sweet . . . He walked in a grey velvet tunnel, through a waning grey velvet night. Here and there other loiterers . . . Europeans, men and women, in evening dress, smoking last

(*Continued on page 10*)

Ready for the Dance

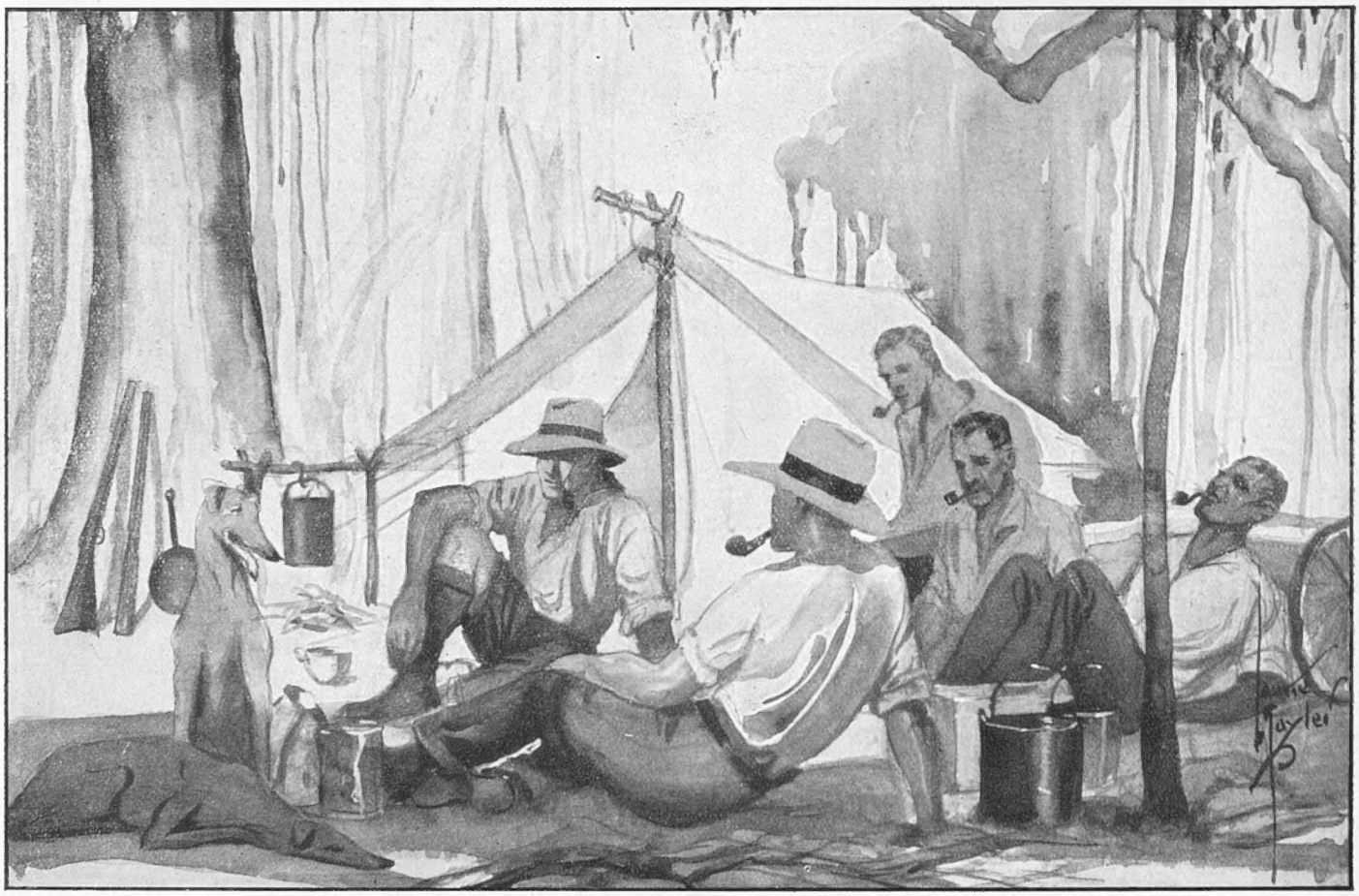
H. G. Cox

Redolent of the spirit of gaiety and youthful exuberance is the study seen above. The original photograph appeared in this year's International Exhibition of the London Salon of Photography

Christmas in Distant Lands: How it Will be

AT AN INDIAN STATION — By Howard K. Elcock

A Christmas dinner in India is a strange combination of East and West. The turbanned *Khidmutgar*, who takes the place of the butler, and the incessant swish of the *punkah* remind the diners that some thousands of miles are between them and Home, but the spirit of the day and even the snapdragon are as sturdily British as though a London fog were swirling outside the windows



A CAMPING CHRISTMAS IN THE BUSH — By Laurie Tayler

The after-dinner smoke, with the temperature round about 90° in the shade—and not much of that—is a familar Christmas time scene in Australia. In spite of the heat, the chief item on the menu is the pudding; very probably out of a tin, and the beverage will be the inevitable "billy-tea." Holly is scarce, but mistletoe is often found growing on gum trees, though it would probably be wasted on the "buck party" pictured by the artist

Spent in India, Australia, Egypt and Canada

IN THE SHADOW OF THE PYRAMIDS By Gladys Peto

A favourite Christmas resort for Britishers in Egypt is the Mena House Hotel. Our artist shows a party of revellers being greeted on arrival at the hotel, with the Pyramids looking down on a scene that will be enacted wherever two or three are gathered together with a view to celebrating the season in an adequate manner

SUNSHINE AND SNOW IN THE DOMINION By Webster Murray

As far as weather is concerned, Canada is certain to provide the snow and frost beloved of Christmas card artists, but so seldom seen in England. In the log house of our artist's drawing the turkey and decorations provide the authentic note of the old-time Christmas, while modern civilisation is represented by the loud-speaker of the "radio" on the window seat

(Continued from page 6)

bedtime cigarettes before the Hotel Koningsplein . . . Malays, scuffling bare feet in the dust, and crooning sadly. . . . On the occasional benches lovers sitting—solemnly, soaked in moonshine, arm touching arm . . . Through breaks in the foliage big, white-shuttered houses—houses like Dick's own—fairy palaces now, with their wide-flung doors and hosts of enormous silk-shaded lamps, coloured like toy balloons.

And eight years ago, when Dick had first arrived in Java, it had been the same—and eight years hence—or eighty, it would still be so . . . Only he had changed—would change . . . And if he'd let himself—if instead of climbing he'd drifted and dreamed . . . Well, he wouldn't have been where he was . . . But he might have kept youth through all these years—and adventure might still be awaiting him around the corner.

"Ah—there it was! . . . The pavilion which had been his home for nearly five years . . . Had he been coming toward it all the time—had he meant to come?

"'That dirt? Poof—under the rug! The dust—so!' With a mouth like a kiss—blowing it away. Little caring—laughing—biting off the same cake . . . Curling into his arms—cooing into his ear . . . Of course, all that had been but a preparation for his real life—just a sort of play . . . But happy, oh happy—in the beginning—before the itch for accomplishment got him. Good God!—could it be that in the end happiness was all that really mattered?"

A boy, like a black shadow, stepped on to the verandah of the little pavilion—stood silhouetted against its white walls . . . A slender shape in a *sarong* followed—held a match for his cigarette. Was it a ghost of himself—of the old Dick Westcott? . . . Was this more of her mocking magic? Dick groaned. "Samira!"

"*Tabeh, toean.*"

A wee brown creature—moon-moth, surely—fluttering past him, silent and swift . . . A familiar scent—lingering long in the stifling, unstirring atmosphere. Could it be? . . . Ridiculous—his imagination was playing him tricks! He would go home—and would walk no more on the avenue at night.

For two days he resisted. But it was absurd! . . . He had only to step out of his front door to prove to himself—that she'd never been there . . . Would she come again?

"Think I'll just go out for a breath of air, Adeline."

On the footpath again. Perhaps he was too early . . .

"*Tabeh, toean.*"

The tiny figure slipped by him and was gone. Perfume pulsing in his nostrils—a perfume which he knew.

The next morning. "I won't go out to-night—it's too idiotic!"

The next evening—gnawing his moustache: "But it was later than this the first time . . ."

"*Tabeh, toean.*"

Finger tips tingling against his shoulder—gone before he could put up a hand to grasp them . . . And again that scent! "Samira!"

The flying figure halted. He said no word, and it went on.

"What a habit you've formed lately of walking after dinner, Dick!"

"I'm afraid of growing fat—and I sleep better"

"You aren't feverish, are you? You look quite flushed!"

"Don't fuss, Adeline—you'll drive me crazy!"

"But you *have* fever! . . . Your hands are frightfully hot!"

"Oh, for heaven's sake, can't you leave me alone?"

Under the trees again—walking—walking . . . "I won't come here! . . . But I *am* here! Anyway, I won't . . . But I must—oh, I must!"

It was true that he was hot; his head was on fire—his brain and his heart . . . Flames scorching away the shell in which he had encased himself. . . . He felt all soft and uncovered . . . Burning, burning! That—that alone in all his life had been real, and nothing else! She had tied a cord of scarlet about the innermost core of him—and all these years she had pulled and pulled . . . He had thought sometimes that the thread had snapped; but it still held fast . . . And now—tighter and tighter—it was hurting—tearing into his flesh—cutting into his vitals . . . He must follow it, or die!

"*Tabeh, toean.*

Calling — compelling — resurrecting—destroying . . . This in the last greeting of East to West. Standing still the little figure—in a golden *sarong*, batiked with bright green birds.

"Samira—go away! I won't come—I can't follow! . . . Do you hear?"

No answer—no sign—except that the shadows swallowed her.

"Samira, come back! Come back, I say!" Frantic: "Oh, God, my head! . . . I'm burning up! Samira, I'm ill—I'm very ill! . . . Won't you wait?"

The trees gave her up, and she was there again . . . Almost he could reach her—but not quite.

"Samira—that perfume—it's making me sick!"

She smiled, but did not speak.

"Samira—for God's sake, say something!"

Still she smiled.

"Oh hell, Samira!—where—what house?"

Then she opened her lips. "The house of my mother, lord—she is dead, and it is now mine . . Thou knowest the way—thou hast been there before. *Tabeh, toean.*" She was gone

The next night neither Dick nor the little figure walked upon the path beneath the flower-weighted trees.

* * * * *

"How long has he been dead?"

"Perhaps one hour . . . I send for you quick—like *toean* doctor tell me."

"Why didn't you call the doctor sooner—before it was too late?"

"My lord begged me not to, and I obeyed . . I did not know it was dangerous."

"How long has he been here?"

"One night — one day — another night."

"What the devil was he doing here?"

Samira cast down her eyes.

"You say he was sick when he came?"

"*Ja, toean*—that is *why* he came, I think . . . I had not seen him before for a very long time."

"It's true—he's only been back from Sumatra a week or two . . . And his wife says he was ill and queer for several days before he disappeared . . . And it seems it was this girl herself who sent for us. Doctor says it's a plain case of *malaria tropica*, too . . . All the same, they're all devils, these native girls—and this one's far too pretty to be decent! But there's no evidence of any sort against her; so I suppose the best thing we can do is to have him moved quickly to his own home, and hush things up as much as possible. No use starting a scandal which we can't follow up—only makes matters worse for his wife! Poor fellow—with his position and everything to live for, it does seem a pity!" The coroner stared down at the still form out-stretched upon a mat on the wooden daïs which filled one end of the *kampong* hut. "But I've seen it so many times! . . . Once get mixed up with a native, and . . . But I expect we'd better get busy. Some men will come to prepare the body and take it away—within half an hour they will be here. They will bring a paper from me. Do you understand?"

Gravely, dry-eyed, Samira nodded. "*Ja, toean.*"

The coroner and his assistant tramping out. Samira standing in her doorway watching them go. "*Tabeh, toean,*" she called politely. Was there mockery in it—in that subtle lisping tone—in that last farewell, when East had done with West?

"Mine!" Samira closed the door, and went to sit beside her dead.

V. H.

Graceless!

"Daddy, as we're paying for this we needn't say grace, need we?"

BY THORPE

By Bertram Prance

INSIDE INFORMATION

P.C. Murphy: "From what I can make out, sorr, your house has been entered from within"

By Batchelor

WATCH YOUR STEP

Puzzled Child: "Mummy, why don't they wipe their feet on the mat?"

The DRAGON in BUSINESS

BY A. A. Thomson

Illustrations by H. R. MILLAR

"'Off with his head,' said the King in tired tones"

"IF you please, your majesty," said the seneschal nervously, "there is a young man . . ."

"Off with his head," said the King in tired tones.

The King's temper was not at his best after dinner. The boar's head had been underdone and the mead corked. Troubles, he reflected bitterly, never came singly. As if that confounded dragon, now ravaging his kingdom in the most annoying manner, were not enough. . . .

"Off with his head," he repeated sharply.

"Oh, daddy!" protested his daughter who sat on the daïs beside him. "You can't off with everyone's head just because the mead was corked."

She was the loveliest princess that ever lived, and her long golden hair hung down to the hem of her golden gown. (And both golden hair and golden gowns hung down in those days, my dear, in a way that would astonish you.)

"He won't slay the dragon," replied the King. "These young fellows never do. We might as well ——"

"At any rate," pleaded the princess, "we ought to see him first. He may be quite nice-looking. We ought to be fair, you know."

"Very well," said the indulgent parent. "Show him in, Jenkyn."

The young man whom the retainers forthwith admitted to the royal presence was an upstanding youth with clear grey eyes and an alert expression. The lute which hung at his side proclaimed his profession as that of a wandering minstrel of the period. (A lute, my dear, is an inferior sort of ukulele.)

"There's nothing like self-possession," said the King to himself.

"What nice eyes!" said the princess to *herself*.

The youth bowed respectfully but not obsequiously.

"With your majesty's kind permission," he began in a pleasant voice, "I shall have pleasure in giving you a slight impression of the well-known ballad, 'George and the Dragon.' Thank you." He swept a "till-ready" symphony upon his lute and went on:

> Whilom there lived a King, perdye,
> With a hey down, derry down, dey;
> No King more blithe and gay than he,
> With a hey down, day down, dey.

"Stop!" interrupted the King. "Cut out this derry-down stuff. It makes me tired."

"Very well, sire," answered the youth. "If you prefer, I will tell my story in prose, in which branch of literature I am equally distinguished, though the poetical version, which has nine hundred stanzas ——"

"Go to it!" snapped the King.

"Well, sire, once upon a time there lived a King, wise and handsome, though not, of course, so wise and handsome as yourself. His daughter was a lovely princess, though not, of course, so lovely as ——"

"How observant he is," said the princess to herself.

"Unfortunately," the minstrel continued, "the countryside was at that moment being systematically devastated by a fire-breathing dragon, who, with one puff of his jaws could (and would) scorch up anything or anybody within a five league radius, and although the King offered the half of his domain and the hand of the princess to any Knight who would deal summarily with the monster, there was, in the colloquialism of the day, nothing doing."

"Dear me," murmured the King, now very interested, "what curious parallels there are in history. Go on, young man."

"After scores of knights had failed, there came to the palace one evening a young man, dressed as a minstrel, of modest speech and unassuming demeanour, who, thrilled by the princess' beauty ——"

"I like them modest and unassuming," murmured the princess, blushing.

"He craved permission," the minstrel went on hastily, "to try conclusions with the dragon, and set out, all unarmed, to meet it. *Round One.* The dragon left his corner ——"

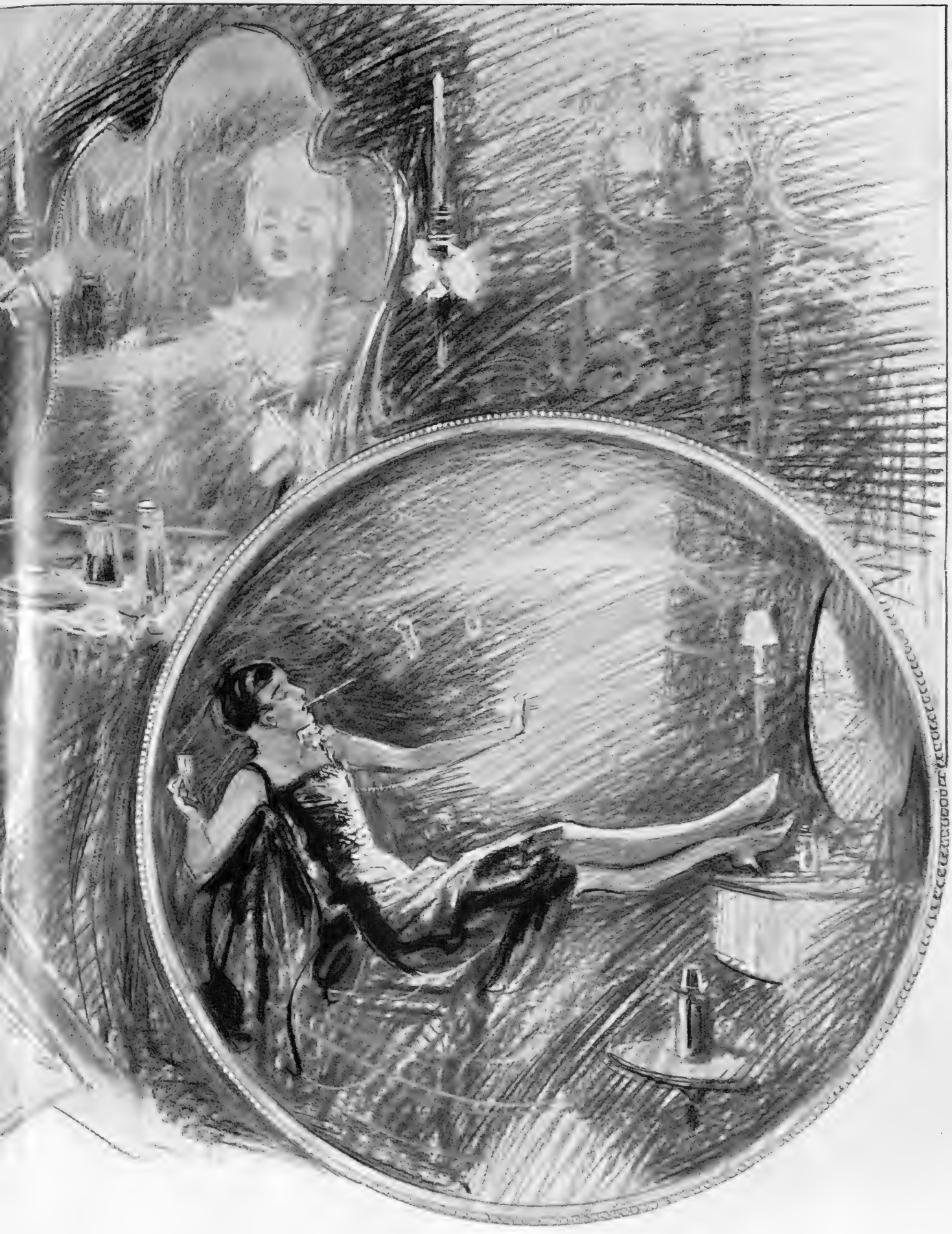
"We don't want any of this special descriptive stuff," interjected the King.

"Quite," agreed the

(Continued on page 16)

"'All cheques should be crossed Lyonesse Bank Limited'"

BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK



A MASTERPIECE OF YESTERDAY AND A SKETCH OF TO-DAY

(*Continued from page 13*)

minstrel courteously. "As a matter of fact, the encounter was, from the point of view of purple-patch journalism, singularly dull. The dragon shot out from his seven heads seven streams of fire thirty-five ells long. Taking from his lute-case a small but magical instrument, the youth directed thence a jet of such power as to extinguish the seven streams of fire simultaneously and render the monster entirely harmless."

"I adore bravery!" sighed the princess.

"Touching this magic gadget," said the King. "What ——"

"Ah!" exclaimed the minstrel. His eyes flashed and his expression became one of rapt intensity. "This desirable result was achieved by the use of the Camelot Anti-Drag Fire Extinguisher, large size model, twenty crowns. Invaluable in case of dragons, ogres, or conflagrations in the buttery. As the firm's sole representative in this country I am able to offer your majesty specially deferred terms. On receipt of deposit, the Anti-Drag will be delivered in a plain van to any address ——"

"Wonderful!" exclaimed the princess.

"Extinguish me that dragon," said the King, "and I'll buy a dozen."

"Herbert . . . . I am to wed the Princess"

"Right," said the minstrel, taking out his order book. "All cheques should be crossed Lyonesse Bank, Ltd."

* * * *

At dawn the following day the minstrel, with the fire extinguisher in his lute-case, strode out towards the dragon's cave. The dragon sallied out to meet him.

"Well, George," said the dragon.

"Well, Herbert," said George. (I forgot to tell you, my dear, that the dragon's name was Herbert.)

"Have you worked it?" asked Herbert.

"Do I ever fail to work it?" said George, modestly.

"You know," said Herbert, reflectively, "this partnership of ours is one of the neatest advertising schemes that has ever been put over. You made the usual financial arrangements, I suppose."

"Yes. In return for services rendered I receive half his Kingdom, which ——"

"Quite," smiled the dragon. "As usual. Fifty-fifty. What's the next kingdom on our list?"

"Herbert," said George, blushing, "there is another item in the contract. I am to wed the princess."

"What of it?" retorted the dragon. "It was in all our previous contracts. You never married the princess before."

"But," said the youth, with shining eyes, "I love *this* princess."

"Ah, well," sulked Herbert, "if you're going to let love interfere with business ——"

"I am," said George, firmly.

"Ah well," growled Herbert, "but it's a pity. That's what I say."

* * * *

"My dear," said the youth, tenderly.

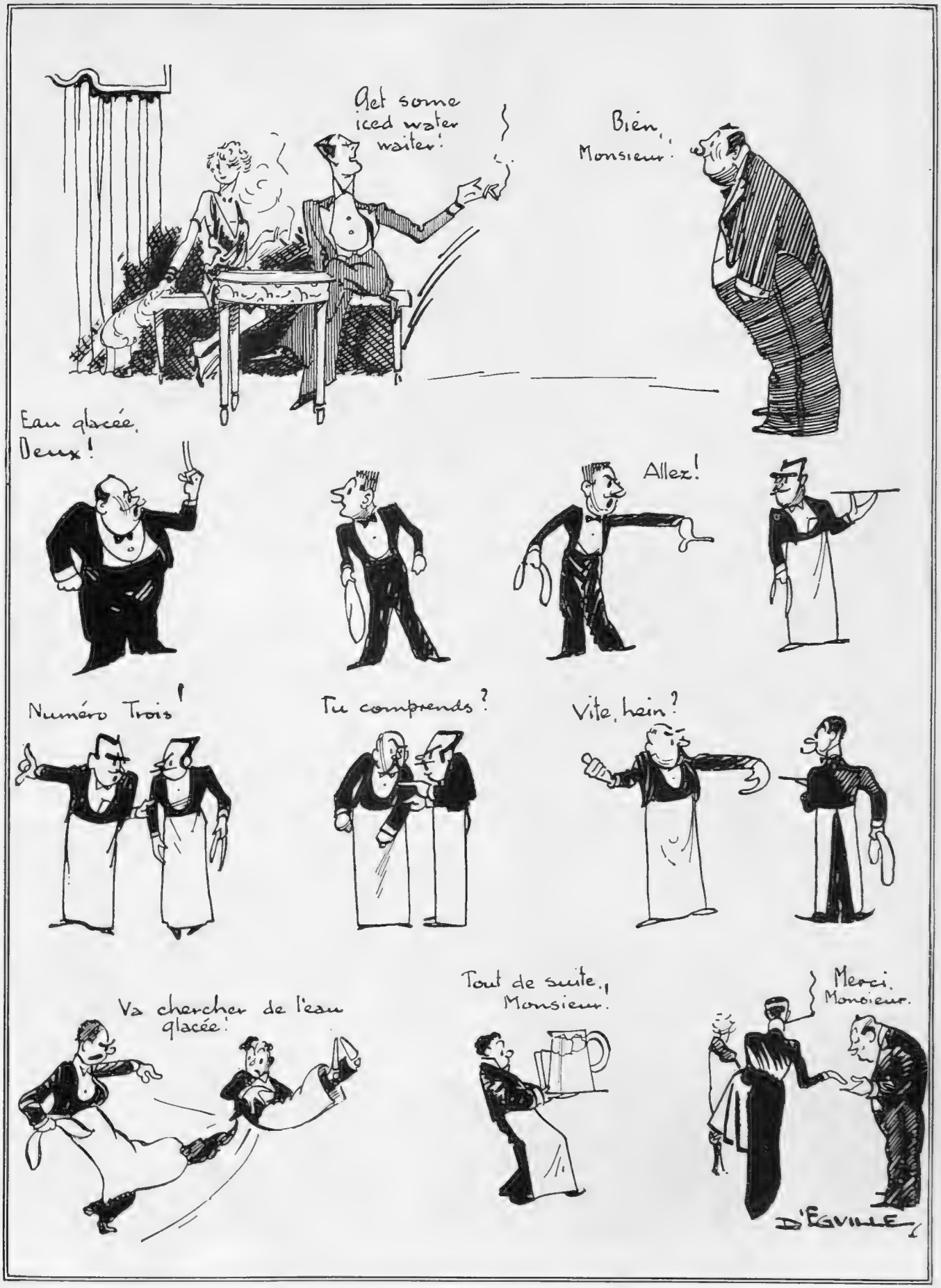
"Darling," murmured the princess. "What shall we do with Herbert when we're married?"

"He'll be useful," replied George, thoughtfully, "to breathe on the brandy on the Christmas pudding!"

A. A. T.

"DON'T WRITE, AND FEAR NO MAN" By Frank R. Grey

Small Boy. "Me and Johnny Smith have been playing at postmen. We put letters in every box down the road"
Mother: "But where did you get the letters from, darling?"
Small Boy: "Oh, out of the drawer you left open yesterday. They were the ones tied up with blue ribbon"



BY D'EGVILLE

"HE ALSO SERVES WHO ONLY STANDS AND WAITS"

THE LESSON

By GORDON PHILLIPS

OH, why did I go to the pro. with my woes
And submit to his terrible glance?
Oh, why did I let him examine my pose,
My grip and my swing and my stance?
My pride is all humbled, my muscles are sore,
A most miserable wreck you behold me—
For I daren't do the things I was doing before,
And I can't do the things that he told me!

But I was playing very ill,
Oh, very ill I played,
For I had lost all art and skill
And I was sore afraid:
I went to him a beaten thing,
I paid him in advance,
And said, "Now is it in my swing?
Or is it in my stance?"

Quoth he, "That grip would mean a pull,
That stance would mean a slice;
That ghastly swing of your's is full
Of most atrocious vice:
The way you use your wrists is all
Completely wrong," he said;
"Your eye is not upon the ball.
You also lift your head."

Oh, he led me away his instructions to try
And I danced to the tune that he piped;
Yes, there at his bidding and under his eye
I sweltered, I swung and I swiped!
I shed all the doctrine in which I was reared,
I was clay and his task was to mould me—
Except that I never (or so it appeared)
Did one-half of the things that he told me.

And now when I am on a tee
My peace of mind is gone;
There are so many things for me
To keep that mind upon:
Now does my downward swing collect
The force it ought to do?
And are my blessed wrists correct?
And do I follow through?

And have I got my proper grip,
Not over-loose nor tight?
And what was that important tip
To keep my elbow right?
And are my errant feet aligned
As they should be or not?
Toiling to bear all this in mind
I duff the beastly shot.

Oh, why did I go with my woes to a man
Who has made me feel ready to die?
Who seeks to remodel my game on a plan
I shall never know how to apply?
It is not that I mock at his maxims and lore
(Ah, would that his wisdom controlled me!)
But I dare not do what I was doing before,
And I can't do the things that he told me!

Sketches by
H. H. HARRIS

The Spirit of Cheerfulness abounds at Christmas-time —

Dewar's

ORIGINATORS of the Fountain-Pen Desk Set, Jade Green Radite Fountain Pen and Pencil

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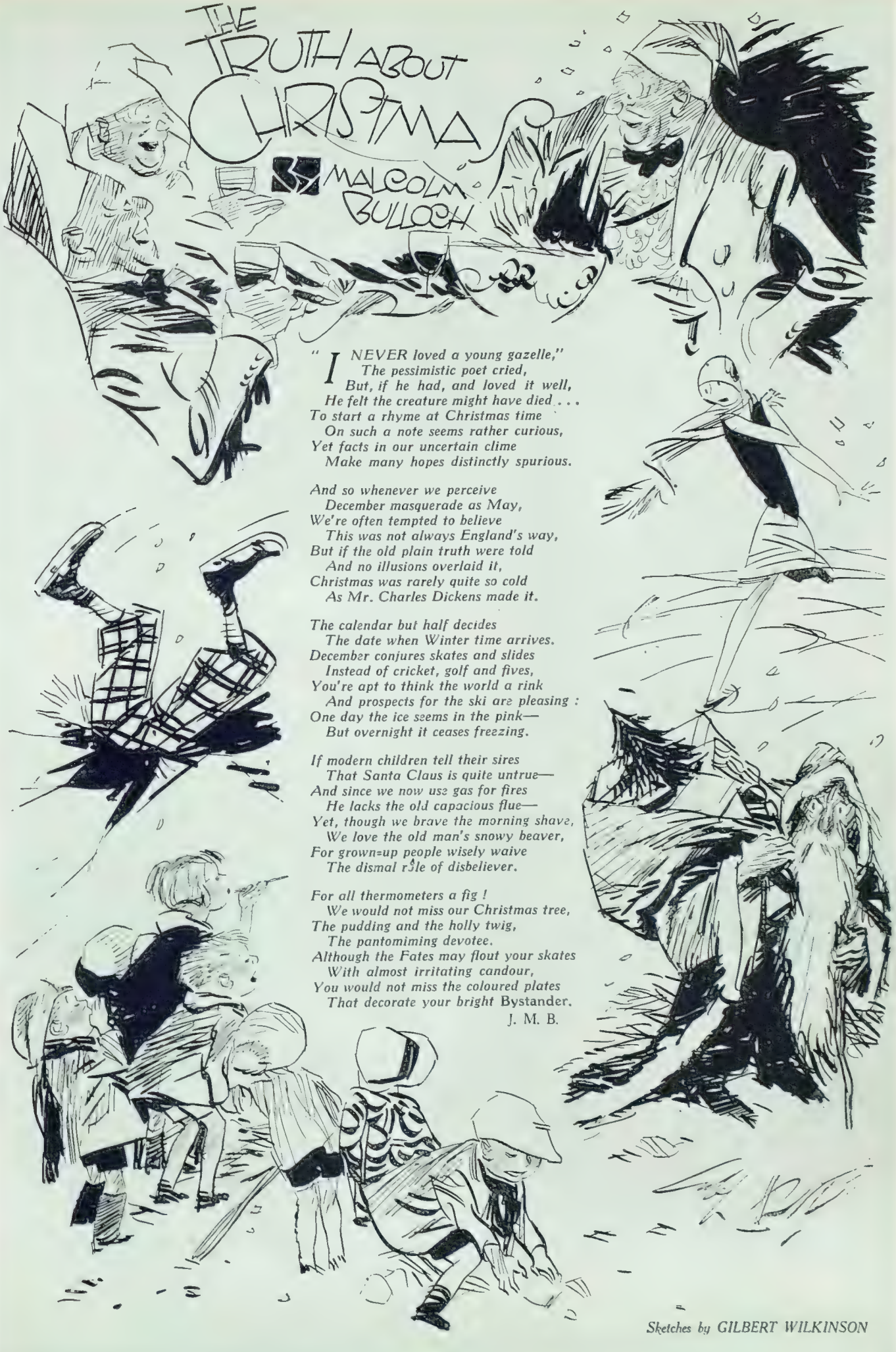
DONALD CENTON

THE TRUTH ABOUT CHRISTMAS

By MALCOLM BULLOCH



"I NEVER loved a young gazelle,"
The pessimistic poet cried,
But, if he had, and loved it well,
He felt the creature might have died . . .
To start a rhyme at Christmas time
On such a note seems rather curious,
Yet facts in our uncertain clime
Make many hopes distinctly spurious.

And so whenever we perceive
December masquerade as May,
We're often tempted to believe
This was not always England's way,
But if the old plain truth were told
And no illusions overlaid it,
Christmas was rarely quite so cold
As Mr. Charles Dickens made it.

The calendar but half decides
The date when Winter time arrives.
December conjures skates and slides
Instead of cricket, golf and fives,
You're apt to think the world a rink
And prospects for the ski are pleasing :
One day the ice seems in the pink—
But overnight it ceases freezing.

If modern children tell their sires
That Santa Claus is quite untrue—
And since we now use gas for fires
He lacks the old capacious flue—
Yet, though we brave the morning shave,
We love the old man's snowy beaver,
For grown-up people wisely waive
The dismal rôle of disbeliever.

For all thermometers a fig !
We would not miss our Christmas tree,
The pudding and the holly twig,
The pantomiming devotee.
Although the Fates may flout your skates
With almost irritating candour,
You would not miss the coloured plates
That decorate your bright Bystander.

J. M. B.

Sketches by GILBERT WILKINSON

THE RINGING OF THE CHRISTMAS BELLES

BY NICK

Snapdragon

By HARTLEY CARRICK

This year an Ealing householder intends to give mulled honey to parties of carol singers. At last the Waits will get their mead of praise.

* * *

A CORRESPONDENT points out that at this period he finds his young nephews are on their best behaviour. It looks as though they are smitten with a fit of mince-piety.

* * *

It seems such a quaint paradox,
That almost my reason succumbs;
For the girls put their tuck in their frocks,
And the boys put their tuck in their tums!

* * *

NEVERTHELESS, we have known girls who can put away their share of good things; but we trust that this year there will be no Christmas "Eve" ill.

* * *

BOYS, who prefer the summer game to football, may now find some solace in reading "The Cricket on the Hearth."

* * *

A CHEF states that too many raisins cannot be put in a plum pudding. Bobby agrees with the currant opinion.

A PHYSICIAN says that champagne at Christmas is a man's greatest enemy. Yet a certain good book tells us we should love our enemies.

* * *

"WHAT present can you suggest I should give my wife's mother?"

"Well, I always give mine a jolly thick respirator!"

* * *

A SPORTSMAN wants to know why we can't have winter racing on the flat. Let him have patience and wait till the slate club secretaries get going.

* * *

A WIRELESS wag remarks that there is no place like ohm. A confirmed meat eater might retort that there is no plaice like ham.

* * *

He: "The evening wore on."
She: "What did it wear?"
He: "Just the close of the day!"

* * *

A SNARE and a delusion, women are,
Was once a famous writer's sane conclusion;
And yet, beneath the mistletoe, I know
Scores you will find who'll hug that fond delusion.

* * *

"To lie like a gas meter" is an ancient phrase. We prefer to call the instrument a contradiction in therms.

IT is stated that we are to see women taxi-drivers. Then we are bound to hear a lot more about the fare sex.

* * *

LAST week at a convivial party in Glasgow, one of the guests suddenly became unconscious. It is alleged that he had been bitten by a haggis.

* * *

WE are now told that character can be told by the nose. That is a thing that ought not to be sneezed at.

* * *

"THAT last dancing partner I had tore my frock twice."

"Then he is quite unaware of the Rent Restrictions Act."

* * *

HERE's to your kind, old, benevolent uncle;
If he's late with his present, just give him a trunk call!

* * *

A COCKNEY comedian can register seven changes of expression in three seconds. It is quite obvious that he knows all about Seven Dials.

* * *

"DICK is a terrible flirt."

"I know. After the dance last night he went and had a sausage and mash!"

* * *

IT is only on Christmas day when paterfamilias unwraps his presents that he realises what home ties really mean.

BY STAN TERRY

THE REST—LESS SEX

A MAYFAIR NIGHT

By DELL LEIGH

Illustrations by
HOWARD K ELCOCK

ANDREW MAILE, the divorced father of the very good-looking young man who was dressing for dinner on a December night in one of those new service flats in Stratton Street, had made a fortune in wheat in one of the American booms. And then fate had decided to place him in the Observation Car of the Pennsylvania-Pittsburg Flyer on the afternoon when the last three coaches of that famous train went hurtling down into the river with the collapse of the Fairmile Bridge.

It had taken best part of a year for Geoffrey to settle his father's intricate affairs in Chicago legal offices. It had taken the trustees best part of a year before that to find "the darned boy," for Geoffrey was wandering about in odd places like the Andaman Islands and North Borneo, trying to forget—not his father's wealth, the bulk of which would come to him—but a woman.

A slip of a woman with pale lemon-coloured hair, challenging cornflower-blue eyes, and the figure of a boy—almost. A thoroughly modern young person was Tonita Terry, with an income and a flat of her own; a super-sports model car that was much too fast; a *joie-de-vivre* that was terribly infectious; a constitution that could stand three cocktails before dinner and twelve cigarettes thereafter without a blemish on that superb, untouched complexion next morning; in fact, a dangerous proposition to most men—a fatal one to Geoffrey.

And she had told him to "go to the devil and stay there" between set teeth, coldly; looking him square between the eyes, as they stood on the dance floor at Ciro's during a pause between encores. Because, while they danced, he had remonstrated with her over her penchant for the society of Britmeyer the "financier," who was referred to in the clubs as "the chorus girl's peril"; who always had a roll of notes in his pocket and a roll of fat on his neck, and was "not fit to be found drowned with." That was Geoffrey's description of him, hissed into her ear during the sob of the saxophones. And she had hissed back angrily at "my best pal Geoff"—as she had been wont to refer to him—consigning him to perdition for his colossal impertinence. Never thinking he would go, and being still more furious and dismayed when he did.

Once she had written to his club, beginning "Don't be tiresome and silly, darling"—but he didn't see this olive branch held out. For the letter came back through the post to her bijou flat in Knightsbridge, marked "Gone away."

The vision of her in that dead-black frock, the pale gold hair above, vivid scarlet shoes and "nue" stockings, with flame in her eyes and ice in her voice, had obsessed the morose days and tossing nights of this very proud young man for many moons of world-wandering. Until at last he had been able to say to himself, as he leaned yawning out of his hotel window at Buenos Aires one sumptuous night: "Tony Terry? M'm—yes—well, that was *that*!" It is well for their peace of mind that women seldom hear themselves written off like this. . .

And now the lure of London had claimed him again after two years away from its insidious attractions that he used to love and had come to hate.

There were, however, still quite a number of the old pals knocking about. One of these, Jimmy Anson, had walked him up Bond Street in the winter sunshine that morning "to help me buy Christmas presents, for heaven's sake," but in reality to have an Angel's Kiss before lunch in the subterranean bar at The Cynics, that impeccable dance club in Clifford Street which has been the means of making many a waiter's reputation and marring many a woman's.

"But you *must* come and see life to-night, Geoff, ol' man," urged his friend, as they leaned on the Cynics' bar, nibbling pieces of cold potato chips and toying with the Angel's Kiss. "It's just the same as it was a couple of years ago, only worse. All the Christmas parties have begun—the best one to-night is at the Bryants'—know 'em?—that doesn't matter. My sister—'member her?—good for you—is a great pal of old ma Bryant. You must come. I'll ring her up and tell her. She'll be tickled to death. We're rolling up about twelve: ask for us at the door and join up with us there. I'll introduce you to all the best sweeties—sure to be some toppers—always are at Agatha Bryant's parties. Well, that's a bet, then?"

(All rights strictly reserved)

"She started violently and slewed round on her stool"

And here he was, at 8 p.m., already mortgaged to three sets of people that night: dinner with Phillips, the cigar man, and his latest lady love at Ciro's. (A funny little contraction of the heart muscles flicked within him at the word "Ciro's." How dam silly!) He had promised to look in at Anderton's party at the Embassy about eleven—"an anniversary of our wedding, Maile—my missus will be delighted."

They were a very queer, old-fashioned couple, these Andertons, very bourgeois, but cheery; seemed fond of each other still, and they'd been married fifteen years. Odd. And there was this Bryant business about twelve-ish. He would probably be hating the evening before he was half through with it. He took a last absent-minded look at himself in the long glass. M'm. Goodish sort of dress coats these Shawes and Mortice people make—quite good; so they ought to be, with all those fittings. . . .

As the Jester's Jazz Band at Ciro's warmed up to matters, and the mellowing little old brandies in the very big glasses began to be lifted to mouths, so did the cloud of Geoffrey's depression thicken about him. He felt out of the picture somehow, now. This room reeked of the personality of that Terry girl, Tony. Confound her! They had sat against these same cushions, she and he, many times. Why, dash it, it was at the very next table, on the night of the Oaks, that summer, she had said, putting a little hand on his knee under the table-cloth:

"Geoff, darling, you're *rather* a pet. I feel so absolutely safe with you. . . ." Safe! Good heavens!

Well, that was *that*, anyway.

But he must get out of this mausoleum of a place. . . .

The Embassy was just the same, merely less noisy. The women of the Anderton party, a large one, seemed prone to dance with their husbands for preference—a curiously dull business. And they were drinking sweet champagne out of jeroboams—ugh!

No; he came to the conclusion as the taxi turned him north up Bond Street, there was no difference between the London of two years ago and to-night. A bit noisier, perhaps, a little more markedly insincere—a shade looser in its morals; a shade later going to its bed—if it ever went during the night hours. Most people seemed addicted to gambling all night. Pretty bad, this gambling fever: so Bill South had said at lunch yesterday. And he ought to know, seeing he was one of the Bloods at Scotland Yard.

The taxi grated to a standstill outside the Bryants' house in Grosvenor Square.

"No, sir," said the regal-looking butler. "Miss Anson hasn't arrived yet; but that'll be *quite* all right, sir—great friend of the family. . . ."

His host appeared in the big square hall.

"My dear fellow, of *course*, any friend of Vera Anson's, delighted! Come you in and have a drink, and we'll look round for a partner for you."

They did, over the edge of their glasses in the supper-room; and a dark woman, Eton-cropped, with a bold but perfectly enamelled face, summoned her host by waving a lobster claw at him.

"Bowser, old boy, tell that sombre-looking, handsome youth," pointing at Geoffrey, "with the burnt almond eyes and the sunburnt face (how *does* he do it? I wish I dared!) that I, Cynthia Brockley *née* Hamilton—but you needn't say too much about that—desire to tread a measure with him on your superb dance floor."

"Cyn, you're incorrigible," smiled her host. "But, as it happens, the poor lad *is* looking for a dance with a beautiful lady."

"Well, if he is looking for a dance with me he's looking for trouble. Nevertheless, being the perfectly charming woman that I am, h'm, tell him I will deliver him up safe and sound to his people when I've, when—well, go and tell him, anyway, and don't talk so much."

"So you're Geoffrey Maile, are you?" said this dark-eyed, smooth-voiced person as she moved like the sylph she was in Geoffrey's arms in the ballroom. "The

(Continued on page 28)

Not Very Doggy!

BY GEORGE E. STUDDY

It's hard to be ugly though chic!

"Scottish Pipers Please Copy"

BY W. HEATH ROBINSON

Ingenious device of a Highland wait for dealing with Scottish boarding houses on Christmas Eve

lucky Geoffrey Maile," she glanced up into his face invitingly.

"How do you mean?"

"Well, wheat, wasn't it?—millions of bushels, or acres, or whatever it is one has of it?"

Geoffrey instinctively recoiled.

"O——h," he replied stiffly. "I say, don't let's talk, you dance so divinely."

"Don't be silly, of *course* we must talk. I like your voice, Mr. Geoffrey. . . . Besides, I'm so bored with this party, aren't you? It's for the young—look at 'em." She glanced round the floor. It certainly was a young person's party. No place, thought Geoffrey, for a worldly night-hawk like this.

"I'm so deathly bored," went on the crooning voice at his neck, "that I'm going on now to have a little flutter somewhere. Much more fun. Why don't you come? You can come with me if you're a *very* good boy."

Instantly Geoffrey was on guard. The red light of danger flared up. Only one thing for this sort of provocativeness. A lie, and a fat one, delivered quickly.

"Awfully sweet of you, but I don't gamble ever."

"You don't gamble? My poor dear, you're not ill or anything, are you?"

She looked up into his brown eyes with deep anxiety in her own."

"As a matter of fact," lied Geoffrey gravely, "I'm simply racked with neuralgia at the moment and am dying to go home. But I can't until the people who asked me here turn up."

"Who are they?" Her voice had resumed the flat tone of the party light conversationalist. Her interest had gone.

"Vera Anson and her brother."

A short laugh. "You'll be lucky if you see *them* before two a.m. No idea of time either of them—never had."

"In that case will they think me horribly rude if I just slip away quietly?"

"Of course not, my dear man."

The fox trot crashed to its end.

"Thanks *so* much," said Geoffrey in the crowd at the doorway.

"Thank *you*. I loved it." And she moved away into the maëlstrom showing a disinterested world nearly all her back.

Geoffrey closed behind him the big glass doors leading into the hall and fumbled for the cloakroom ticket embedded in his waistcoat pocket.

A parlourmaid, evidently in charge of the overflow coat rack rigged up in the lounge hall, was sitting by the fire, silk-clad legs crossed, smoking a cigarette.

Geoffrey stared at her and she smiled but did not move.

"Rum household this," he thought, "suppose this is the modern servant."

He held out his ticket and she rose languidly.

Dashed pretty girl all the same—red hair, gorgeous skin, figure of a goddess—amazing class, these servants.

"She had told him to 'go to the devil and stay there'"

"Do you think I might have my coat and hat?" He tried to make his tone as ironical as possible—after all it was pretty cool, this.

"Rather! I imagine that can be done fairly easily. Over here the man put it, didn't he?" A dazzling smile She moved serenely across the floor.

This was no domestic servant. The voice was that of a lady; a charming voice, too. He followed her, puzzled, and she held out his coat, still smiling. Then she said:

"Dear me, how frightfully bored you look."

"I am."

"Why?"

"Well—I'm a stranger here. The people who asked me haven't turned up. You know how it is, but . . ."

"Well, then, stay and smoke a cigarette with me. I'm bored too." She proffered him a gold cigarette-case with platinum initials.

"You'll forgive me," began Geoffrey, trying hard to keep astonishment out of his voice, "but—er——"

"Oh, yes, that's all right. I'm not a parlourmaid *really*. This is only a joke. I'm doing this for a bet. The Bryants *think* I am, never having seen me before—so mum's the word, please."

"Of course, but aren't they likely to catch you out here off—er—off duty, so to speak?"

"No. I've got a trusty footman 'tother side of that glass door. A footman will do most things for a pound note." The gay laugh again.

"I see," said Geoffrey. "And then?" This woman was really rather attractive. A sportsman too, evidently.

"My time is up at one o'clock, thank God. Then I can *really* enjoy myself. Lor', how bored I am with this—and all for two tenners!"

"What happens after one o'clock?" he asked, beginning to be interested in this dare-devil Venus.

She made a graceful motion of her beautifully manicured hands indicative of a person dealing cards.

"I see."

"No, you don't see. 'Cos I don't suppose you've ever been there, since you're a stranger in these parts." (Great Scot! what superb teeth this woman had!) "A priceless place. All people like ourselves, don't you know? It's a club, of course. But very well run and very cheery and *soigné*. The lovely part is," she lowered her voice, "that half a dozen men from this party are coming on—they're all so bored with the children." She pointed upstairs. "You are the seventh man who has smoked a cigarette with me. You'd better come along too—seeing how bored you are."

"But you say it's a club?"

"Yes, but they know me very well there. Any friend of mine, don't you know."

"Where is it?" asked Geoffrey.

(Continued on page 33)

BY JACK GORDGE

SET TO MODERN MUSIC

Like the thrill of a lingering kiss, the subtle allure of Paris lies wrapt in Fétiche—garnered with fairy hands to express the mystic charm of Eve—and awaiting her adoration.

Fétiche

PERFUME - - 5/- & 7/6
(handsome crystal-glass bottle)
FACE POWDER - - 2/6
TWIN COMPACTE - - 4/6
(incl. lovely shades of Rouge for Brunette or Blonde)
LIPSTICK - - - 2/6
TOILET POWDER - - 3/6
TOILET SOAP (box of 3 Tabs) 6/-

L. T. Piver Paris

A Christmas Stocking

WHEN I was young, they gave to me
A stocking from a Christmas tree.
I took a peep.
I had desired a pocket-knife ;
What wonder, at my time of life,
That I should weep ?

A doll was in the stocking then,
And dolls are of small use to men
Of six years' pride.
It was to me a tragic matter.
No wonder I made faces at her—
Oh, how I cried !

Some years have passed, and now for me
Another stocking decks the tree.
In different style.
I see a doll with eyes so mocking ;
Now, do I think that stocking shocking ?
Well, I should smile !

A. A. THOMSON

"THIS IS THE EMPIRE'S STANDARD OF QUALITY"

In whatever part of the world you happen to be, you will get the best if you say "Crosse & Blackwell to your grocer.

CROSSE & BLACKWELL

The name that is known to the ends of the earth

C.F.H.

(Continued from page 28)

"I say, are you a discreet person?" She studied him critically.

"As the grave. And as I feel rather like the grave at the moment I will respect your confidence, kind lady." This stunt must be inquired into—the only amusing adventure he had struck since landing at Southampton.

"Righto. Go to 169, Brook Street. Ring four times—a long, two shorts, and a long: don't forget that: say to the man at the door: 'Miss Ryan hopes your foot is better'—that's our password to-night for guests coming alone—and you'll find the best old brandy in London there, by the bucket."

"Sounds topping," replied Geoffrey.

"It is. I'm coming very soon. Look out!" She rose hastily. The footman's face had appeared through the glass doors. He had winked solemnly.

Geoffrey stood on the Grosvenor Square pavement, fingering a silk scarf thoughtfully.

Are you being a fool? Are you? No. It might be rather fun. Why not? And if he did lose a couple of ponies what on earth. . .? S-s-s! Taxi. . . .

As the Venus had said, it certainly *was* very *soigné* and rather magnificent. A patriarchal "Jenkyn" type of butler had replied gravely as he took Geoffrey's coat: "Thank you, sir, very kind of Miss Ryan. It is *much* better, I am glad to say." And he had pressed a bell several times in the black and scarlet lacquered hall. A Hebraic gentleman with an unctuous voice had come down thickly-carpeted stairs and had said: "How do you do? Let me show you the hang of this place. One does as one likes here. Don't play, of course, if you don't feel inclined: and come whenever you like: delighted to see you. Maile, did you say? Mr. Maile, Paterson," nodding what was evidently a future right of entry for Geoffrey to the butler.

The first floor had been converted into one large room, in which baccara, chemin-de-fer, and high poker appeared to be in full swing at about half a dozen tables. An American bar, with a white-coated attendant, covered one end from wall to wall. Everybody seemed to know everyone else, and there were at least seventy immaculate people present. Geoffrey edged a way through the rather noisy crowd towards an anchorage at the bar to take stock of things. Here he found Anson, digging into an enormous pot of *pâté de foie gras* with a silver spoon. ". . . Good heavens! I'm damned sorry, Geoff, ol' man. Bryants' party: so it was, I'd forgotten—dear, dear! Have some of this—first rate—there's the bubbly in that ice pail by your elbow. What? Oh, I lost Vera at the Berkeley, believe she had a surreptitious date and sneaked out by the other door—I dunno. Who brought you here, you sly old dog?"

"She looked up into his brown eyes with deep anxiety in her own"

Geoffrey explained, adding: "Who is the red-haired lady, anyway?"

Jimmy Anson replied with a very full mouth.

"Oh, that's Cushla Cummins," and he chuckled appreciatively. "Cynthia Brockley and she have got the largest share in this—er—joint, you call it in American, don't you? *How* like them both: they'd stop at nothing, of course. But at ma Bryant's party! I call that a *very* good egg." And he laughed boisterously.

But he was off again to the chemmy table almost at once with a "Well, see you presently: why not come and take a shoe for a bit? Won't hurt *you* if you lose a monkey or two, confound you. . . ."

Geoffrey watched the assembled company thoughtfully as he ate a crab sandwich. So *this* was what one did nowadays? The men were all the hard-bitten type "out for blood," as he expressed it to himself. You saw them everywhere: nothing new about that. The women—ladies, of course, or as near as damit: but terribly hard faces, most of them; terribly tired looking, all of them; their hair cut like men, dead white cheeks, scarlet mouths—slits most of these mouths were in the faces. Hardly any clothes — but that's the thing, apparently. M'm: thank God he wasn't married to one of . . .

And as these thoughts trickled lazily through his mind he found himself looking straight into the eyes of Tonita Terry. There had been a sudden clearance of people round one of the tables: and there she was, chin on hands, looking at him. There was no sign of recognition in her face: she was merely looking him over critically in rather a rude way, it seemed to him: and then she dropped her eyes and turned her attention to the game again.

The dead cut! Good God! But why? Here, this won't do: he must get out of this place, and at once.

Thin, insipid rain was falling. It had become very cold. "Treacherous weather," that Jenkyn cove had said on the doorstep. Ugh! Like London itself. . . .

But why had Tony done that? How rotten of her. And she who used to be such a sportsman. . . . He mooned along past the side door at Claridge's. She was deteriorating, he supposed—they all did, these gambling women. What a place for a girl like Tony, though, night after night. He became suddenly angry at the thought of it. Why were such places allowed? They weren't . . . what would old South say if he knew? Why not tell him? By Jove! That was an idea! Why not tell him now and have the beastly place raided?

Good enough! Policemen aren't supposed to sleep—he'd ring him up.

He did—the moment he got back to Stratton Street, but a very sharp and

incisive voice cut in with: "That will do, Geoffrey: *not* on the telephone, *if* you please. Do you want a drink? Well, you must buck up then, because I want my bed."

The bulky figure of Bill South entirely filled his little hall in Half Moon Street. He had emerged from one of his tiny rooms in a dressing-gown.

Geoffrey told him the story—including Cushla Cummins.

"Y-e-s. I know that young woman," said the Scotland Yard official gravely. "She'll be for it one of these days, I predict. But, my dear boy, we can't just walk in as you suggest. A search warrant has to be obtained and much *finesse* has to be employed. Still, the Chief is very hot on these places now—very. We shall probably act, as we say, 'on information received.' Many thanks. Hope you've got no friends there. They'll get it pretty hot, too, if the case comes before Mercer."

"When will you do it?" asked Geoffrey. His anger and disgust were increasing with his tiredness.

"Oh, I dunno, in a night or two with any luck. Won't you have a drink? Sure? Well, good-night then—I can't stand late hours."

It had stopped raining. A sickly-looking moon leered over the bare trees in the Green Park: men were washing the roadway in Piccadilly with a "s-sss—swish—gurrl"—of hose. Geoffrey stood aimlessly on the kerb watching them. . . . "Hope you've got no friends there . . . they'll get it pretty hot." What had he done? Bill Anson: several other quite decent chaps too, no doubt. And Tony . . . she would be there, almost certainly, and in the Police Court subsequently, and in all the newspapers after that . . . her photograph too, probably. Headlines such as "The Gambling Spirit—Society Ladies at Marlborough Street: Piquant Revelations: Magistrate's Censure" . . . Oh, *lor!*

No. That wouldn't do. A real dirty trick—apart from anything else. He must get her out of *that,* at all costs. And quickly. He nodded to a crawling taxi. Well, she couldn't eat him. "Brook Street, one six nine. . . ." It would be so odd, talking to her once again.

The room was even fuller and stuffier. They were three deep round a baccara table: some tremendous play seemed to be going on. He could not find Tony at first, until he looked towards the bar; and there he saw her perched on one of the stools, draining a glass. She seemed to be alone, though men and women stood and sat about her, drinking and shouting at each other, which was their method of speech. Now for it . . . he clenched the hand in his trouser pocket and crossed the room. Her back was towards him.

"Evening, Tony."

She started violently and slewed round on her stool.

"Oh, Geoffrey, how you frightened me! How are you? I hear you've amassed millions: and you're in the right spot for parting with them; try one of these club sandwiches—not bad: you might have had the decency to smile at me or something when I gave you a frantic wave across the room earlier on."

"You didn't wave," replied Geoffrey shortly. "You cut me dead."

"Did I?" She seemed quite unmoved. "Oh, well, you deserved it. Don't let's argue. I'm dropping with fatigue. I've dropped all my money too, and I'm going home."

"I suppose you're here every night?"

"Mostly, yes—why not? What else is one to do?" and a coldly challenging look came into the tired eyes.

"Certainly, if you like this sort of thing," he nodded towards the crowded tables.

"I do, thanks: but I've had more than enough of it to-night. Bye-bye." She climbed down from the stool.

"So have I." He wasn't going to let her slip from him like that. "Let me give you a lift in my taxi."

"But I only live round the corner now—in Berkeley Street—a ruinous place, but cosy."

"Practically next door to me. Let's drive round several corners—I—er—want to tell you something." He paused, looking away from her and fumbling with some straws in a tumbler. She gave him a swiftly interrogative glance.

"Not to-night, thanks—but you may drop me if you like. Half a minute. . . . Tell the man a hundred and thirty," she said when she appeared in the hall. . . . "Well, Geoffrey, what do you want to tell me?"

Now that she was with him once more in the dark vault of the taxi all the old flaming allurement of her propinquity swept over him. He had meant to say, jocularly: "Look on one-sixty-nine Brook Street for the last time, so beware!" But the words wouldn't come. No words would come. He could only sit and look at her as she sat there, her shoulder almost touching his, the street lamps as they passed by casting gleams of pale light on that lovely, tired little face. She sat erect, looking straight ahead, hands in her lap. Neither spoke. The driver hooted twice as he turned from Davies Street into the Square—a warning, it seemed, of arrival—and termination.

"Well, Geoffrey? I'm just about home now."

"I don't know—nothing, dear. I was just thinking how—er—how wonderful this was: like old times—that's all." The cab came to a standstill.

"So was I," she said, and jumped out quickly. "Good-night, old man, and thank you."

He flung out after her: gave the man half a crown and said "Go away!" This was *too* marvellous. What on earth. . .? He strode across the pavement to her. Head bent, she was searching a silk bag for a latch-key.

"Oh, Geoff, that was mean of you. I thought I was making rather a dramatic exit." He saw a smile dimpling the corners of her mouth. "There *is* no exit, darling," he found himself saying, "except from one place."

"Oh, where's that?" She was pushing a Yale key into a lock.

"From a house in Brook Street: the one we've just left." He came nearer to her.

"Why—can't *you* afford it?" She had swung her door open and turned from the opaque gloom of the hall inquiringly towards him.

"I'll tell you why to-morrow if you'll lunch with me. And then perhaps I might come here to tea. And then perhaps you'll dine with me at Ciro's: would you?"

"You seem to have mapped out my entire day for me to-morrow, Geoff."

"Yes, dear—and the day after—and all through next week, and——"

"Not so fast, young man. By the way," she came out on to the doorstep, "you might at least wear a decent dress tie; yours is all cock-eyed—allow me. . . ." She came close to him and put up her hands to adjust it. But instead Geoffrey felt a light touch of her lips on his cheek—a gently backwards push: a quick slam of the front door: a "Good-night" faintly from behind it—and silence. . . .

He did not see the policeman on the pavement and collided with him rather violently.

"'Ere—wot's come over *you,* anyway?" asked a stern voice.

"I'm damned if I know," replied Geoffrey jubilantly, "but here's a quid for *you,* anyhow; and a merry Christmas—and all that sort of thing, don't you know."

"Thank you, sir—very kind of you, I'm sure. Good-night, sir."

"G'night."

The pavement seemed a long way off: odd: rather wonderful—the whole thing: and she had kissed him . . . *extraordinary!*

She still used the same scent. M'f—m'f—what was it she called it? "*N'aimez que moi*"—N'aimez? . . . *Mar*vellous. . . .

D. L.

"All on a Winter's Morning"

Photographed at Chamonix by Horace W. Nicholls

The idea that the Christmas of Dickens and the Christmas cards has gone the way of most of our old traditions is, happily, not true as far as the region of the Alps is concerned. With the sun shining on a sparkling world from a cloudless sky, and an exhilaration in the air which brings back our lost youth, there is nothing to compare with these favoured lands in winter

The Scissors

By OLIVER MADOX HUEFFER

I LIVE in a city which objects to being called a suburb of Paris, and I went into our head post office to-day and there I happened to meet a friend, a very wise Frenchman.

I did not go into the post office because I wanted to buy a stamp or send a telegram or anything like that. In France no one but an idiot or an idler ever goes to a post office to do business; he goes to a *café* instead, where he can hope to be served in less than half an hour. I went to the post office because I expect to run over to London in a day or two, and I always go to a French post office before I go to London because it makes me realise what wonderful people the English are.

Our head post office is in the Avenue de Paris, and outside it looks like a palace, and inside it looks like one of the biggest banks, with mural decorations and long, shining counters protected by bright brass grilles. If it were a bank—especially an English bank—there would probably be half a hundred clerks busily at work behind those counters. Because it is a post office—a French post office—there are four old—or let me be polite as I am in France, and say middle-aged—ladies. Three of them sit at a table far removed from the counter playing with rubber stamps and telling each other the latest news of the *quartier*. The fourth, who is also the oldest, sits at the counter, behind a little rabbit-hole in the brass grille, cutting little bits of yellow paper out of a book with a huge pair of scissors. Before the rabbit-hole was a long queue of people, thirty or forty of them, with the saddest faces you ever saw in your life. They were not angry or impatient, they were like sheep suffering from toothache, awaiting the coming of a merciful butcher to put them out of their misery. They were the general public, waiting to buy stamps and things.

My friend, the very wise Frenchman, was standing a little apart from the queue, regarding it intently. When he saw me enter he rushed towards me with every sign of horror in his face. "My friend," he cried, "are you mad? You have lived here ten years and you still enter a post office!"

"But you also," I protested. "You are also here."

"That is different," he said pityingly. "I am, as you know, an artist-painter. I am preparing my picture for next year's Salon, which is entitled *Russian Intellectuals Awaiting Trial by the Cheka*. I came here daily to study expressions."

Then, as we went away, he told me the story of the scissors. When post offices were first opened in France, he told me, gum and perforated paper and things like that were not yet invented, so coupons and the like were cut off with scissors and stuck on with paste. Some time after the Revolution the public began to clamour for more up-to-date methods. Naturally no notice was taken of them for half a century or so, because, as we all know, in France the public is made for officialdom and not officialdom for the public. But one day a new Minister of Posts and Telegraphs came into office, who was full of reforming zeal, and he gave orders that scissors and paste be done away away with and modern methods introduced. Mark what followed. In a certain office was a young and beautiful girl who was engaged to a virtuous scissor manufacturer. In the new edict she read the coming ruin of her lover, who had a comfortable contract for providing so many gross of scissors monthly to the "P.T.T." At once she flew to arms and called a meeting of her fellow postal employees to protest against such pandering to the mere public. The movement grew, threats of strikes, if not of revolutions, were freely uttered, the iconoclastic Minister was removed, his successor bowed before the storm, and all question of modernising French postal methods was abandoned for another fifty years or so. "The old lady behind the counter," concluded my friend solemnly, "was the heroine of that affair."

"But the virtuous scissors-maker?" I suggested.

"He made a fortune, assumed the title of Marquis, and is now the head of one of the oldest noble families of France. Of course he jilted her, as she could not provide a suitable *dot*, and that is why she looks so discontented."

"But even that does not explain why there are only four employees in such a big post office," I protested.

"Evidently in England you have no political party which is pledged to economy. Four employees cost less than sixteen, and if the public grumbles it is, after all, only the public."

All the same, I think there is something to be said in favour of the British G.P.O.

By ARTHUR FERRIER

HAVING NO HEART

THE VILLAGE CONDUCTOR: "Mr. 'Opkins, you're out o' tune somethin' cruel!"
MR. 'OPKINS (an inveterate card player): "Third player always plays high, don't 'e?"

BY WILMOT LUNT

GAUZE AND EFFECT

BY CHARLES JOHNSON

MODERNISING AN OLD SPORTING PRINT

The "Highflyer," York to London, with Christmas party aboard breaks down in a snowstorm

EXTON EXPLAINS

By OWEN OLIVER

Illustrations by ALBERT BAILEY

"My sister thinks you are wasted as a butler"

"DAMN!" said Lady Alice.

She threw a letter on the floor of her brother's study.

"Eh?" said Lord Haslenden.

"Damn! . . . That man Jackson won't go."

"Good job too," his lordship grunted. "It's bad enough to have a woman of our family going exploring in Africa without her taking a man. Why the deuce don't you try taking a man without going to Africa? Time you settled down. I'm sick of seeing you in the picture papers: Lady Alice Haslenden, the famous explorer, in native costume."

"I can't be photographed in native costume this trip."

"Why not?"

"No costume!"

"Nice place to take a man to!"

"Nasty place without a costumed companion. I *must* have someone. You aren't doing much at home; principally looking out that Ermyntrude doesn't run away! You'd be better off if she did! Why don't *you* come with me?"

"I'm essentially a civilised man."

"Tame tom cat! How about your precious Exton? I shouldn't think he was incurably civilised."

"Him? . . Here he comes with the tea. You'd better ask him. . . . Exton, my sister thinks you are wasted as a butler, and would do better as chief of staff in her next confounded expedition. aren't a funk, are you? You were wounded three times in the War and gained a Distinguished Conduct Medal. My brother says you were a devil at trench raiding. My job's no riskier than that."

"I hadn't your ladyship to look after then." He bowed politely.

"I can look after myself; and you too!" she asserted. "I only want a white assistant in case I get a touch of fever, or come across poor Fuzzi-Wi-Ti again."

"Was he the Chief you shot through your pocket because he had the good taste to wish to marry your ladyship?" the butler asked.

(Continued on page 42)

"You have something else to explain now, Exton," she said . . .

I don't want any tea. I'll leave you to discuss the idea."

He went out.

"Now, Exton?" said Lady Alice. "Discuss!"

"There is really nothing to discuss, your ladyship," the butler said. "I regret that I must consider myself unsuited for the position."

"Why?" Lady Alice asked. "You

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BY HARRY DIXON

THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

(Continued from page 39)

"No. *That* chap only wished to acquire me. Fuzzi-Wi-Ti was a Christian Chief and proposed to make me his *pukka* first wife—when he could kidnap a parson. It was very embarrassing, because he proposed with his tribe round us, and wasn't prepared to take a refusal. So I pretended to faint. He whooshed the tribe away—he was quite a delicate-feeling man for a native—and carried me off to his hut. Then I revived, and hit him over the head with his own club, and escaped. You know that necklace of claws I wear? I took that as a trophy. I don't think he'll propose again; but I'd prefer to have two white men in the party. Speaking as man to man, why won't you come?"

"Unsuitable, your ladyship. Do you require anything else?"

"An answer to my question. *Why* do you consider yourself unsuitable! . . . Is it by any chance a question of your lurid past? Don't twiddle your thumbs. Sit down and tell me about it. I can stand a certain amount of past, and I suspected you had one, or you wouldn't be a butler. You're an educated man."

"Public school and 'varsity. Neither would wish me to claim it."

"How did you come to go to the devil?"

"Common taste for music, your ladyship. I met him in a travelling opera company. I was second tenor for six months, and leading tenor for nine. Then I ran away from it."

"With the cash box?"

"No, your ladyship; with the contralto. She ran away with me really. It was a habit of hers. She ran away *from* me shortly afterwards. I had another stroke of luck at the same time; an uncle left me a few hundred, and I started a financial agency."

"Cent per cent?"

"Cent *ab*-sent, your ladyship! I lost more in principal than I gained in interest. So I decided to enter a comparatively honest profession."

"Butler, eh?"

"Burglar, your ladyship!"

"How interesting!"

"It *is* an interesting profession, your ladyship; but overcrowded and unremunerative. Electro-plate has been the ruin of it. However, I wasn't doing so badly; but my career, like that of other professional men, was interrupted by the War."

"You weren't a conscientious objector?"

"No conscience, your ladyship. So I went in right away. I had the honour of serving under your brother, and rose to be sergeant-major. We did a good deal of trench raiding together just for the exercise, your ladyship—and took several turns at carrying each other back; which made a good feeling between us. When I was demobbed, he offered me my present post."

"Not knowing your past?"

"Knowing it," the butler said.

"Good for him! He's more moral courage than I thought! . . Well, I've as much as he has. I'll chance you for my job, Exton."

"I am sorry, your ladyship, but I am unable to accept your very flattering offer."

"She went to the lane: and to him . . . ."

"Have you given me the real reason for your refusal?"

"I have given you what I hoped your ladyship would consider sufficient explanation."

"But I do not."

"Then the matter remains unexplained," he said. "Permit me to thank your ladyship warmly for the confidence which you would place in me. . . . May I remove the tray?"

"Damn the tray! Don't raise your hands. I suppose you swear."

"Not in my capacity as a butler, your ladyship."

At two in the morning, Lord Haslenden's study was in darkness, except for a glimmer from behind the opened panel which formed an outer door to the wall safe. A man with a glow-lamp was busy there. Presently he locked the safe, shut the panel and locked that, and turned to the room. The electric lights flashed out then, and revealed him as Exton. Lady Alice stood by the switch in her dressing-gown, covering him with a revolver.

"You have something else to explain now, Exton," she said, gritting her teeth.

"I had a doubt whether I had fastened the window, your ladyship, and came down to make sure," he stated, with a polite bow.

"I saw you at the safe with the Haslenden diamonds in your hand," she said furiously. "I take it that the true explanation is that bulge in your pocket."

"It is only a revolver," he told her deprecatingly.

"You liar! Anyhow, keep your hands away from it. If there's any shooting I shall be first. . . . Sit down there, and fold your arms, while I think. . . . I don't see what I can do, except rouse my brother and send for the police. . . . My God, Exton, I thought there was *man* in you; and a bit of *gentleman* left. My brother befriended you; trusted you; and I find you taking the family diamonds—they're worth more than money to us—I find you taking them from the safe!"

"Your ladyship is under a misapprehension," Exton stated calmly. "I wasn't taking them out. I was putting them in. They are there now."

"*What?*"

(Continued on page 45)

BY BRUNELLESCHI

THE KISS

Wishing You A Merry Xmas
To.....
From.....
ASSORTED
SHARP'S
SUPER-KREEM
TOFFEE
The GIFT that makes the wish Sincere
SHARP'S SUPER-KREEM TOFFEE
MAIDSTONE

(*Continued from page 42.*)

"There now, I said. You can cover me with your revolver. As a matter of fact, I should not attack you under any circumstances whatever—while I open the safe to prove my words."

"How did you come by the keys?"

"Borrowed them from your brother's pocket. He is a heavy sleeper. I was on my way to replace them."

"Take off your jacket and throw it on the floor. I won't chance the chivalry of a man who'd rob his benefactor; his old comrade. It's far worse than shooting at an armed woman. Don't try to get the revolver out. I can hit an ace at twenty yards. . . ."

"Hit me, if you like. I don't much care."

He pulled his coat off savagely, threw it on the floor, and walked over to the safe. Lady Alice followed with her revolver at his back. He unfastened the panel and the safe and opened a case and displayed the precious diamonds.

"Thank God!" said Lady Alice. "Exton, I—I didn't *like* to think you were a hopeless blackguard. Appearances were against you, you know."

"I know . . . I know . . ."

He reclosed the safe.

"Out of respect for your ladyship I should wish to resume my jacket," he said. "You can remove the pistol first."

"Throw the bally thing on the couch," she said. "There goes mine! . . . Sit down. I'm going to find out whether you're past my help. . . . How long did you keep the diamonds after you took them out?"

"I did not take them out, your ladyship."

"Then how did you come by them?"

"I found them."

"Where? How?"

"Upon the back seat of a motor car. In a suitcase."

"When? Whose car? Whose suit case? Under what circumstances?"

"Half an hour ago. The car was Mr. George Dennison's! The suit case was Lady Haslenden's. The circumstances——? Well, I don't know how they'd be regarded in Africa. In this country, when a married lady goes off with a man at 1.30 a.m., taking several suitcases, and her husband's family jewellery—to the mind of the family butler the circumstances are compromising."

"But she hasn't taken the jewellery?"

"She thinks she has."

"Exton! You mean she's *gone?*" The butler nodded. "With *him?*" He nodded again. "You did nothing to stop them?"

"Why should I, your ladyship?"

"She was your employer's wife."

"She wasn't too much his wife, your ladyship! Half a wife's worse than none!"

"You thought he was better without her?"

"Don't you?"

"It wasn't for you to judge. . . . What exactly happened?"

"I'd overheard things and suspected. So I slept half awake; as if I were in the trenches; or Africa. I heard a car draw up in the lane, and dressed quickly. When I listened at my bedroom door, I heard her ladyship—Ladyship! I know what *I* call her!—I heard her go downstairs. I followed quietly. She crept into the study, turned up the desk light and went to the safe. She kept the duplicate keys, you know. I watched from behind a screen, and saw her take out the diamonds, and put them in one of the two suitcases she was carrying; noted it very carefully. I dodged round the screen till she had turned out the light. Then I followed her again. She went to the lane; and to *him*. My original idea was to wait until they were getting in the car, and then demand the diamonds before they went; but I was afraid they wouldn't go without them; and I considered it would pay his lordship better to lose his diamonds than to keep his wife."

"You are a thoroughly immoral man, Exton!"

"There is often a conflict between morality and affection, your ladyship! I have great regard for your brother. . . . I thought he'd pull off a double event if he kept his diamonds and parted with his wife. So, when they went back to fetch more luggage—eleven packages she took in all!—I hid underneath the car at the back."

"Why didn't you take the case that had the diamonds in it, while they were gone?"

"I was afraid they'd miss it, and wouldn't go. I put it in a corner so that I'd know it. . . . They didn't detect me. She got up in front beside the blighter Dennison, and they started. I hung on behind; pulled myself up by the hood, reached over the back and got the suitcase with the diamonds in. They were going pretty fast when I dropped off and I fell. That's why my—er—garments are cut at the knees."

"They've been bleeding."

"Wash off. . . . I hope the matter is explained to your ladyship's satisfaction?"

"Well . . . You're an unscrupulous scoundrel, of course; *most* immoral, I should think; but you're sensible. . . . Here, shake hands! You've done my brother a good turn; but you'd better not tell him. He might think you've taken rather a liberty with his affairs."

"Well, you see, Lady Alice, he'd put up with anything he could shut his eyes to, to keep the ancestral name out of court. I think more of him than of his ancestry! . . . And of *you*, Lady Alice."

"Then why won't you join my expedition? You have shown to-night that you are exactly the man I want; quite a kindred spirit! Why do you think I go messing about in Africa? Do you suppose I care a fig for their beastly manners and customs, or their idiotic folk-lore? I go for the same reason that you've gone in for burglary and trench-raiding, and—contraltos! I want life! Excitement! I shall go again, anyhow; but unless I get another man beside myself, I daren't venture among the Su-si-sukas; Fuzzi-Wi-Ti's lot; the chap I had to club to stop him marrying me."

"You wouldn't have to club me, of course," Exton said; "but, otherwise, I am in the position of Fuzzi-Wi-Ti. Lady Alice, we can't go off to the wilds as two men. One of them is a woman; and the other . . . a chap who'd lose his bally soul—if any—even try to save it!—to marry her."

"Well!" cried Lady Alice. "Really! . . . It's most annoying! You're *just* the man I want; so desperate and unscrupulous, and—well, you weren't moral about that woman. Of course, I'm not a contralto; but, after what you've said I couldn't possibly take you . . . unless we got married first. . . . I think, perhaps, I might meet you to *that* extent!"

O. O.

RIGHT TO A TEA

A contemporary states that Cold Tea Punch will be popular in American Prohibition circles this Christmas.

Come, lad. Come, lass.
Now raise your glass
To the drink that has got some zip in it.
To-day we'll praise
In loyal lays
The nectar greenish-brown
That has won such just renown.
No heel taps, please. No mere sippin' it.

Though "rye" and rum
May do for some
We've no use for wild alcoholidays.
Our country's taste
Is far more chaste,
So let the tankards foam
In each Prohibition home
With Tea. That's the true drink for jolly days.

Port, Gin, Champagne
All lure in vain,
America's in her right senses now;
So toast with me
The Turgid Tea
That's favourite by far.
Atta, boy! Hot dog! Rah, Rah!
We're all in love with *Thea Senensis* now!

BRUCE WOODHOUSE.

"Lady Priscilla ffallowes walked out into the snow"

An Ultra-modern Melodrama

By A. J. TALBOT

Illustrations by ARTHUR WATTS

It was Christmas Eve, and dry powdery snow like fine star-dust drifted across the moonlight on to the glistening landscape. Never, perhaps, had Glebe Castle, ancestral seat of the Duke of Loamshire, looked down on more seasonable weather for the time of the year.

Within, by the merry blaze of the yule-logs many of the house-party were forgathered early to drink cocktails! And a witty and gifted gathering it was! It included Lady Elsie Tryppe—a bohemian of nineteen summers with two days' stubble on her neck—the well-known commentator on problems of the day in the Sunday Press. There was the debonair Lord Ouze who (as his Press agent had carelessly allowed it to leak out) wrote plays under the pseudonym of "Edward Bulger"; by his side was the Hon. Edith Sangzure who (through a similar slip on the part of *her* Press agent) was known to be none other than Lottie Haynes, speciality dancer; and in either ingle-nook sat Lady Helen and Lady Sydney Cul-de-Sac, whose Press agent likewise had let the cat out of the bag and identified them with the Baby Sisters in *She's My Cutie*.

Through all the persiflage and badinage it was noticeable that they were endeavouring to make the one commoner of the gathering feel quite at his ease. This was Mr. Maurice Goldenstone, of huge influence in film- and theatre-land.

Goldenstone's attention, however, kept wandering to where the rosy-cheeked, white-haired, Dowager Duchess of Wurzel sat frigidly antipathetic to the general flippancy, for nestling against her in the half-light Goldenstone saw the sedate little figure of the Dowager's grand-niece, Lady Priscilla, the daughter of the house.

Lady Priscilla ffallowes was the only child of the Duke of Loamshire. There was an old-world, lavender charm about her which modern fashions could not suppress. Her tightly rolled "shells" seemed to be shrinking from the scissor and the razor; and with a light wrap she censored, to some extent, the indiscretions of her modish evening dress. For some time she had been sitting in pained silence because a prim contribution of hers to the general conversation had encouraged Lord Ouze to try out—with enormous success—an epigram from his play on the stocks, "Why does the word 'ladylike' make one think of red flannel camisoles?"

Suddenly, she became aware of Goldenstone reminding her of a promise to show him the famous Loamshire tapestries—the last of the Glebe Castle art treasures; and glad of an excuse to get away from the hectic atmosphere, she led him out of the room. But before they had gone very far, Goldenstone seized her hand impulsively.

"Lady Priscilla," he said, hoarsely, "I am a man of few words. I love you. Will you marry me?"

Lady Priscilla endeavoured to freeze him with a glance.

"Say the little word 'Yes'," he continued, trying to get her other hand as well, "and my love shall raise you to the stars. You shall play the lead in a film of my own directing."

"I wonder you don't suggest revue!" she said icily.

"Your lightest wish," he replied, simply, "is my command. A leg-show it shall be—I will have special items written for you, Lady Priscilla, in *I See You're Back.*"

"Oh, how I hate you!" she cried, rushing from the place. She was still greatly agitated when she ran into her mother, the Duchess of Loamshire.

"Ah, Prissy," said the Duchess, "I was looking for you. Your father wants to speak to you."

"If it's about Mr. Goldenstone——" Priscilla began, nervously.

"Oh, has he spoken already?" interrupted the Duchess, rapidly shepherding Priscilla towards the library. "What a relief to your poor father, for you know, darling, landed property is frightfully sticky, and we simply don't know which way to turn. But I am sure that Mr. Goldenstone—or I suppose I must say, Maurice, now—will do the handsome thing."

"But, Mother——"

BY WEBSTER MURRAY IN MID-ATLANTIC

CHRISTMAS AT SEA

(Continued from page 46.)

"Don't apologise for him, Prissy . . . perhaps he's not *quite* . . . but there, I'm sure he's kind. Why, already he has half-promised to feature me in the next Goldbug-Bosky super film."

With this they entered the library where the Duke of Loamshire was pacing nervously up and down.

"Hilary," cried the Duchess, with something approaching a cheer. "It's all right. Maurice has already spoken."

"Maurice?" queried the Duke. "Oh yes, of course; Goldenstone! Er — Maurice. Quite. Splendid, splendid."

"But I keep trying to tell you—I've refused him," said Lady Priscilla.

"Refused him!" gasped the Duke and Duchess in unison, the latter continuing, "And may one ask why?"

"Because my heart is another's. I love Earl de Mayne."

"A beggarly lord of the manor," groaned the Duke, helping himself to brandy. "Be frank with me, is it definitely a case, or is it just on appro.?"

"I don't think I quite understand," replied Lady Priscilla, drawing herself to her full height. "I love him as I believe he loves me, but we are, of course, not to be affianced until he has asked your consent."

"Well," rejoined the Duke, smiling inwardly at her naïveté, "he won't get it. So you can make a start to-night in learning to love Maurice."

"I shall never wed any but Earl de Mayne."

"Don't be so ridiculous, child," blurted out the Duchess. "How do you suppose you are going to live?"

"I shall try to be an ornament to Earl de Mayne's station in life, to grace his board, to win the affection of his tenants——"

"She wants to be a Lady Bountiful," tittered the Duchess, sitting helplessly. "Positively palæolithic!"

"May I remind you," retorted Lady Priscilla, "that for three centuries the two families have been trying to arrange such an alliance so that the de Mayne and the Glebe estates could be joined?"

"Say the little word Yes:' . . ."

"Two hearts that beat as one," said the Duke, banteringly, "two mortgages to bleed in unison." Then, in a changed tone: "To come back to earth, Priscilla, I desire you to marry—er—Maurice. He's a steady fellow who has hardly ever been divorced, and he will put us all on our feet. If you play your cards properly you ought to be able to dig yourself in on the films or the stage between the registry office and the decree nisi."

"My heart is another's."

"That's no reason why you should be selfish. Think of others. Maurice has already as good as promised to rent Glebe Castle at my figure for some historical films. And he hinted at finding a part for me in Douglas Mix's new film, *The Knights of the Round Table.*"

"You! *YOU!* Oh, don't go on the films, Daddy," wailed Lady Priscilla from her heart.

"You never know, Prissy," said the Duke smugly, "and when you accept Maurice I shall expect him to cast me as King Arthur."

Lady Priscilla burst into peals of hysterical mirth.

"Stop that!" raved the incensed Duke. "It's time we came to the point. Will you, or won't you, marry Maurice Goldenstone?"

"Never!" she replied with a stamp of her little foot.

"Go!"

"Then no longer shall my castle shelter an unnatural child. Go!" And while I live never more cross my moat. Never let your shadow darken my portcullis again."

. . .

Later, the cloaked figure of Lady Priscilla ffallowes went sadly down the old oak staircase for the last time. As she crossed the hall a figure came towards her with great dignity. It was the Dowager Duchess of Wurzel, every inch a Dowager, every inch a Duchess.

"You are in trouble, dear Priscilla," she said in her clear tones. "I don't know the rights and wrongs as I'm a little hard of hearing, but whoever it may be don't give him up if you love him. There's no pleasing this family. When these snowy tresses were raven, they tried to come between me and Lord Robert just because I was in the Empire ballet. But your great-uncle Robert was true blue, and to be worthy of him and his family I went in for refinement. Refinement *was* refinement in the 'eighties! I never did the splits after we were engaged, and—once we were married—I wouldn't kick his gibus off his head as he loved me to do. Well dear, I keep rambling on and you want to be going. So, goodbye! And remember, Love conquers all."

The Dowager accompanied her farewell kiss with a packet of sandwiches and a jewelled flask of port. And so, to the sounds of the Black Bottom from the Castle mingling with the old church bells from the village below, Lady Priscilla ffallowes walked out into the snow.

A. J. T.

Chester, Cardiff and Carnarvon are said to intend conferring the freedom of their cities on celebrities. The "freedom of the C's" will acquire a new meaning.

* * *

Some girls, it is said, prefer to dance with one another. Perhaps they believe that a miss is as good as a male.

A CHRISTMAS TRIOLET

Beneath the pearly mistletoe
A kiss is easily mislaid—
When fairy-lamps are burning low
Beneath the pearly mistletoe.
What lips! A perfect Cupid's bow!
Who *was* the saucy little maid?
Beneath the pearly mistletoe
A kiss is easily miss-laid!

Fred. W. Bayliss

BY HOWARD K. ELCOCK

"A DEEP DEPRESSION IS CENTRED OVER ICE-LAND"

In Old Japan

MABEL LUCIE ATTWELL

That East is East and West is West
Is just largely a matter of how you're dressed.
One may have her skirt to her nose,
Another—her garment may reach to her toes.
But in the matter of playing Life's game,
Well—all pretty maidens are—much the same!
The Man in the Moon—he says it's so,
And he—seeing all of 'em ought to know!

"Let it snow, we've got Daddy's Player's"
NCC.246

Suggestions for Christmas Gifts.

3273

"BOBBED" CASE in Lizard, with blue enamel brush. 25/6

M. 156

PARTY CASE in cross-grained morocco, in various colours, fitted with brush, comb, mirror, lipstick and powder-box. 15/6

4J. 156

SABRETACHE BAG in real jazz morocco, lined suedene, with embossed sprayed front and flap. 15/6

2H. 126

SABRETACHE BAGS in real jazz morocco, embossed sprayed front and flap, fitted with large mirror and captive purse. 12/6

4H. 106 Smaller size 10/6

4C. 76 „ „ 7/6

143

MANICURE CASE in real leather, fitted as illustrated. Obtainable in various colours. 35/6

65

POWDER BOWL, hand-painted, in various colours and designs. 8/11

776

PERFUME SPRAY, to match. 12/6

V.C. 27

BATH CRYSTALS in presentation vase, red or blue design. Four perfumes: Violet, Verbena, Lavender and Cologne. 5/9

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"He and his carriers had crossed the divide at sixteen thousand feet"

The Yellow Priest

By E. WINCH *Illustrations by A. W. SINDALL*

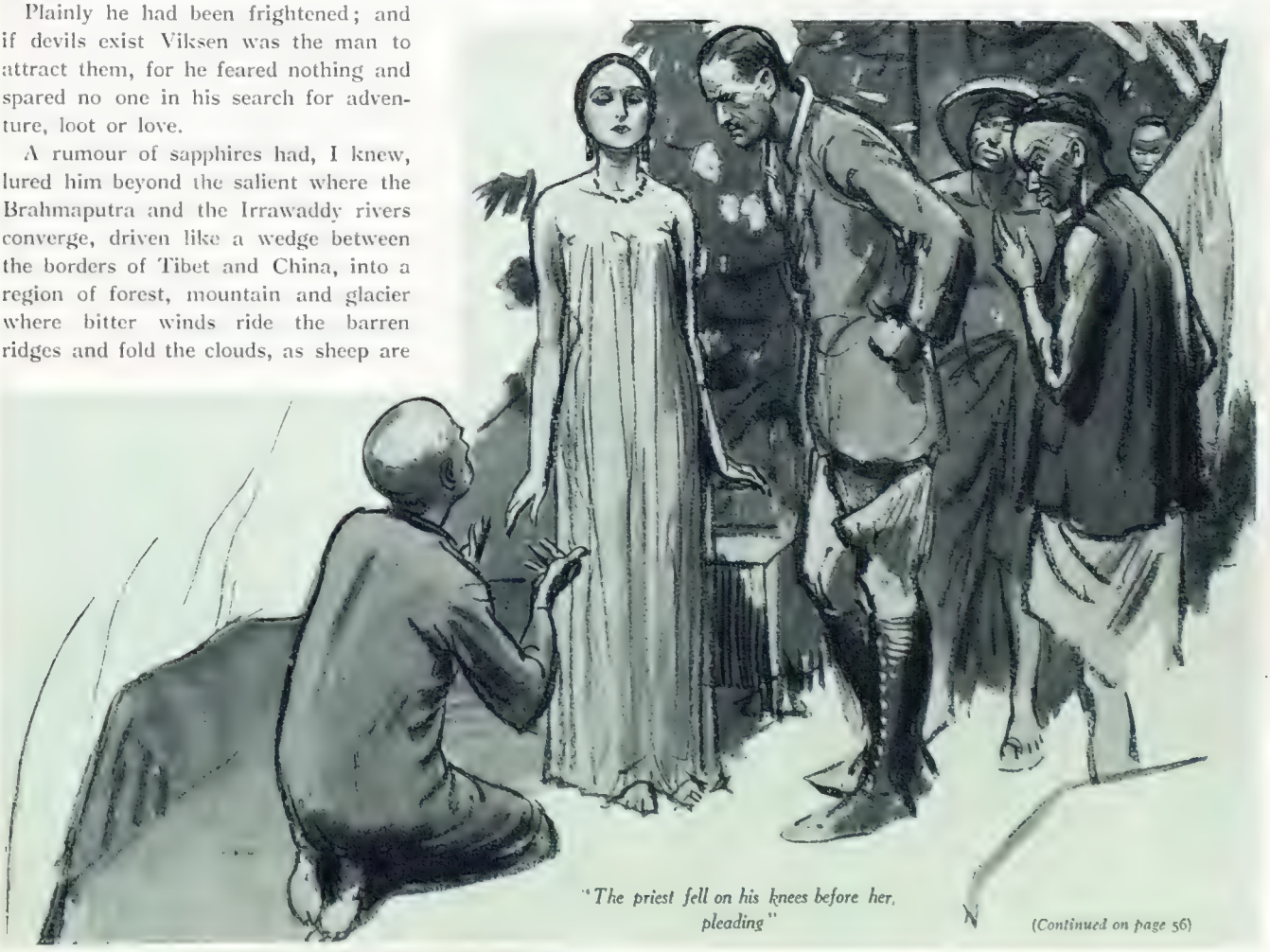
FOR what follows I have the word of Viksen's Chinese servant alone, and to all my questions he has but one reply, "Plenty bad devils up in those hills. . . ."

Plainly he had been frightened; and if devils exist Viksen was the man to attract them, for he feared nothing and spared no one in his search for adventure, loot or love.

A rumour of sapphires had, I knew, lured him beyond the salient where the Brahmaputra and the Irrawaddy rivers converge, driven like a wedge between the borders of Tibet and China, into a region of forest, mountain and glacier where bitter winds ride the barren ridges and fold the clouds, as sheep are penned, between peaks white with eternal snow.

He and his carriers had crossed the divide at sixteen thousand feet and were dropping down towards unknown country south-west of Menkung when they came at dusk upon a village hung on the terraced lip of a gorge. Li-Sung, the servant, stated that they found a temple there.

"A monastery?" I suggested, since a debased Buddhism is the religion there.



"The priest fell on his knees before her, pleading"

(Continued on page 56)

BY HELEN MCKIE

THE CHRISTMAS GIFT

BY H. H. HARRIS

SELF-ADVERTISEMENT

"A temple," he insisted. "A very old temple built by giants who could lift the largest rocks. . . . Also there was a priest, a yellow man but not Chinese."

Viksen was no antiquarian; loot was probably his object when, calling Li-Sung to follow, he started in great strides towards the green oblong of the temple door.

"Outside the air was cold and devil-dragons were roaring among the hills," declared Li-Sung, "but inside it was hot and full of men. The tall priest stood over a bowl of green fire singing in an odd tongue, such as men use to malicious spirits."

The chant was ending, and Viksen, satisfied that here was no temple treasure, was turning to go when the goat was dragged forward; at the same instant the priest flung fuel on the fire, a tongue of green leaped towards the roof—and Viksen stood still.

For in a gilded niche above the priest's head stood the carved figure of a woman.

Ivory, gold and jade had gone to her making, under the hand of a master if Li-Sung spoke the truth; life-size, the play of light upon her naked limbs seemed to set them shimmering on the edge of movement and drew blue fire from a triple ring of cut sapphires that circled her waist. The stones alone must have been worth a rajah's income, but the woman——

"She was the very mother of all beautiful women-devils," declared Li-Sung. "I, who have had no good from women and fear devils, could not look away."

Viksen, I gather, stood gazing spell-bound at the tilted jade eyes which stared back into his own, "as though his eyes could pull her from the shelf," Li-Sung said. The yellow priest took a step towards the intruder and very slowly the villagers' heads swung round to see the man who had stolen upon their rites.

Li-Sung plucked at his master's arm, but Viksen did not move. Abruptly, the green light flickered and faded out; as blackness fell like a curtain the door behind them clattered shut.

Howls, shrieks, and curses broke out, greasy cloth and stinking flesh pressed against them, hands came clawing out of the dark, and Li-Sung felt the point of a knife at his throat when Viksen fired. The acrid smoke and echoing clamour died away, something clutched at Li-Sung's legs, and he felt himself being borne under that human sea.

Then—and Li-Sung swears to this—quite suddenly a green flame flickered high up in the air. Above the knotted, heaving backs of the crowd he felt a rush of cold air, and found himself standing by Viksen *outside* the door of the temple in the wan light of dawn.

Behind them the villagers, awed and silent, stole away to their huts.

The carriers, huddled together muttering charms to keep off the devils that were abroad, were quickly roused to break camp; they had loaded up when the yellow priest came striding down the hill; he fell on his knees and pawed at Viksen's boots.

"What's the row?" Viksen asked Li-Sung.

"He says, 'Give him back his god!'" interpreted his servant. "He says, 'Take milk, maize, what you like, but leave the lady of the temple.'"

"I don't know what he's playing at," said Viksen angrily. "I haven't got his joss."

"No believe," reported Li-Sung.

Viksen cast a curious look at his servant but said no more; pushing the priest aside he gave the command to march. They had left the village a mile behind and were on a narrow path leading to the forest below when, like a wraith, the yellow priest rose from behind a heap of rocks and demanded his goddess from Li-Sung.

When the Chinaman denied the theft on his own behalf, as well as that of his master, the priest became angry, and they had to drive him off with sticks. Viksen took no part in this scene, but when they reached the shelter of the first line of birch and rhododendron he turned upon Li-Sung.

"Out with it," he commanded, "what have you done with the joss?"

Li-Sung was terrified—with cause, for he had seen Viksen do horrible things to a disobedient coolie; on the edge of the forest he and the others stripped, emptied the kit, convinced their master that the ivory woman was not there.

Viksen tapped his teeth thoughtfully.

"Very well," he said, "we will make a detour and come back to that village when they don't expect us. We will teach them not to call us thieves—those stones are worth a lot."

This he said, according to the Chinaman, to Li-Sung; it sounds queer, but Viksen was a queer man, little better than a pirate, and it is easy to believe that he shared his loot with his men.

With this in mind they fetched a semi-circle back towards the pass; rock and shale, moss and patches of half-melted snow made it perilous going; they had halted on a steep incline when they saw something move among the rocks ahead.

Viksen went forward alone, and so long went by without his returning that even Li-Sung's Asiatic mind rebelled; torn between fear of devils and of Viksen's temper, Li-Sung crawled on his stomach round a wall of rock and so came on them unheard.

They were sitting side by side on a flat-topped stone, very near to one another but not touching—Viksen and a woman. The wind was whistling past them in icy blasts, but he sat gazing at her, entranced; then slowly her head slid back and Viksen's lips met hers. . . .

Li-Sung crept away.

An hour later Viksen came striding down the hill with the woman on his arm.

"Camp!" he commanded, and a sobbing sigh of deep surprise ran round the staring group of coolies, less for the apparition of the woman than the madness of the order. Li-Sung ventured on a protest, for which he got kicked, and on the only flat piece of ground, where the slope shelved into a precipice, they set up the tent and built a fire. Then, swiftly as a well-trained regiment, the clouds gathered, shutting off the camp in a white world of its own.

Viksen made some halting explanation to his servant, some tale of a lady travelling and deserted by her porters, but Li-Sung *knew* the beauty of her pointed oval face, ivory dusted with golden freckles, the mocking, tip-tilted, jade-green eyes belonging to no mortal woman but a demon of the snows. . . . He brought the meal in trembling silence until Viksen, cursing his clumsiness, drove him from the tent.

And then, at sunset, the cold cloud lifted like a blind, and there, crouched on the edge of the abyss, was the yellow priest. Viksen was smoking outside the tent, the woman was within; he looked at the man as one looks at a fly which teases.

"For in a gilded niche above the priest's head stood the carved figure of a woman"

"Tell him," he said to Li-Sung, "that I haven't got his joss, and if he hangs about here I'll have him pitched over that cliff."

The priest burst into a long, moaning petition, and Viksen took a menacing step towards him; at the same moment the tent flap lifted and the woman came out; she smiled wickedly as her eyes fell on Viksen and the priest.

According to Li-Sung the yellow priest cried triumphantly, "Look! He lies!" and pointed to the woman; Viksen struck down his hand. Disregarding him, the priest fell on his knees before her, pleading, "Lady, return; return lest thy people fail."

Li-Sung chimed in: "She came of her own free will. Take her, priest, for she has bewitched my master."

Viksen caught his servant by the ear. "Translate what I say or I'll wring your neck," he said fiercely. "Tell him to go; if he speaks again to the lady I'll send him to glory over that——" He swung one arm towards the gulf; the woman laughed, and "the note was like a little wind among the corn-stalks," said Li-Sung.

"I tell you," shouted Viksen to the priest, in stumbling dialect, "I haven't got your joss."

With a single movement the yellow priest arose, catching with his hand at the hem of her saffron robe, ripping it from heel to neck; it fell, in a dull yellow ring, round her feet, leaving her there before them all, naked and perfect. The priest pointed to her waist.

Coiled there was a triple ring of cut sapphires.

For a moment they stared, then with a roar like a bull Viksen charged the priest and swung him, shrieking, over the gorge.

Li-Sung saw and yelled; Viksen looked back, but too late; as chalk breaks under a hand the cliff cracked and fell, carrying yellow and white into the abyss.

Li-Sung ran to the edge and peered over, but the forest tops had closed for ever over Viksen and the priest. Then Li-Sung looked back, but where the woman had stood was a ring of saffron cloth and nothing more.

I told this tale to McCrail, a Scots geologist and an unimaginative man, and waited for him to say that Li-Sung, having murdered his master, invented the story.

"A—hm!" said McCrail. "It's odd, but two months ago, finding my way back to the Salween, I passed that temple. There was no priest, but the figure was in the niche with a painted smile that'd turn a body's blood to water and a mint's worth of sapphires round her naked waist."

E. W.

LITTLE LIONEL'S XTMAS SOCK

By YOGO HAMA

Illustrations by OKUN INGAMAI

"He had just finished opening with an axe the grand piano"

IN response to innumerous requestings from parentals and other authorised persons, I are writing an Xtmas bedtime story for juvenine Bystanders of not more as 10 annums of age, on or about. I cannot hesitate to feel it are very great honour to purvey the 1-st story ever imprinted in Hon. BYSTANDER for only infantine purposes, and are more certain as eggs that it will bring terrific enjoyments and edifications into the nurseries and other juvenile abodes in all ¼s of Grt. Britain. Are you ready, dears? Uncle Yogo speaking :—

Long and long ago and more as 1-ce upon a time, there was a little juvenine boy name of Lionel not more as 7 or 9 seasons old. He was always up to youthish and innocent prankings like as setting fire to his nurse, aiming bricks to his good little sister's head, filling his Hon. parentals' boots with water, and suchly boyish frolics.

"Now, Lionel," imbegged his mama the day before Xtmas, "I are going out to make purchase a pint of glue, so you must be very good, otherwisely Uncle Xtmas will not produce you a lucky sock."

"Indeedly yes, mama," impipped little Lionel, "I will be more good as gold and execute only pious deeds in your absents. Permit I should give some of my 1d.'s to the poor infantines who non-possess any kind mamas or Uncles Xtmas."

Weeping tears for joy and thinking that very perhapsly her little Lionel would grow up to become a bishopric or other episcopate and live in Westminster's Abbey, she left her domestic abode. For more or less as 20 minutes, little Lionel played with his sister Gwendoline by decapitating her dolls' heads with his papa's razor and other happy games. Then they opened the nursery window (which was 6 stories up, because their papa was Managing Director of the Greenland Gold Mining Syndicate and lived in a very swellish abode in Brondesbury, N.W.6) to look if their mama was returning. Laughing for boyish glee, Lionel pushed his little sister out of saidly window and she arrived to the ground with a loud flop where she lay like as if swooning.

Little Lionel was rather sorry for his so rude behaviour, so he went to play with his baby brother name of Marmaduke whom he very greatly adored and was only 3 or 5 months of age. Marmaduke clapped for joy at observing Lionel who was his favourite brother.

"Should it not be an enormously good idea," impopped Lionel, "to play at making swim the Channel?"

Baby Marmaduke laughed for pleasure at this so nobbish idea. So Lionel filled the bath with water and put Marmaduke in same. He laughed gleeishly at his little brother's strenuous evolutions. But in less as a few minutes, baby

(Continued on page 60)

"He was always up to youthish and innocent prankings"

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"'When was that?' asked the girl, with her mouth full"

LEAVE WELL ALONE

By ROBERT GRANT *Illustration by S. BRIAULT*

WERE it not for the fact that a great number of wishing wells exist in these islands I should not have ventured to set down this story. I consider it essential that the identity of this particular well should remain hidden. If you read on to the end of this story I think you will agree with me.

After the War I took to writing novels: it is hardly necessary to add that I had other means of livelihood; otherwise I should, of course, have perished miserably of starvation.

In the summer of 1919 I went to a certain town in Cornwall in a praiseworthy search for local colour, which in all probability I should have obtained better (and more cheaply) from a guide book of Western England.

On a beautiful July morning I found myself in a char-a-banc which three days a week ran out as far as the ruins of Terrabil Castle, of which I knew nothing, although the name seemed vaguely familiar to me. The car was full. We were seated four abreast, and since the three other occupants of my seat are involved in the story I must pause for a moment to describe them.

I occupied one end of the seat. Next me sat a man of probably thirty (my own age), who might have been a soldier. In other words, he looked like most other young men at that period.

Next to him was a tall man of middle age, whom I put down as a poet. He wore a beard and a soft hat and a flowing tie; and beyond him again was a girl, whom I imagined to be his daughter.

I don't want to be unkind, but from the first that girl "put me off" to a quite extraordinary degree.

She was not ill-looking, and had obviously decked herself out with a view to attracting; but for some reason, perhaps over-elaboration, she had conspicuously failed. I think she can have had no eye for colour, those parts of her person which were evidently intended to match never quite did so. For instance, her flesh-coloured stockings clashed with the pink of her skirt. Her mauve lips disagreed with the lilac of her jumper. Her teeth were of a different shade of yellow from her hair; and so on. But above all she wore that discontented look which mars even the most beautiful faces. She munched sweets from a paper bag perpetually, and as the car proceeded found fault with every detail of the scenery in a shrill and penetrating voice. I felt exceedingly sorry for her no doubt æsthetic companion; the more so as I found my own neighbour exceptionally agreeable.

I was right in assuming that he had been a soldier. We had often, it transpired, taken part in the same actions, concerning which he talked well and interestingly. It was only by pressing him that I discovered he had won the Military Cross twice, and a host of foreign decorations.

"I had to protest at last," he said with a grin, "when the War Office began to send me duplicates. They aren't much use to a commercial traveller, you know."

He seemed just as keen on his present commercial career as he evidently had been on soldiering, and described his restless life with a considerable sense of humour.

Arrived at Terrabil Castle we all got out to inspect the ruins. Luncheon, we were told, could be obtained at an inn near by, and in two hours' time the car would set out on its return journey.

So little remained of the ruined castle that a cursory inspection sufficed. The

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luncheon at the hotel proved equally disappointing. After luncheon we were faced with the prospect of more than an hour to kill. The day being hot, a stroll in the beech woods which surround the castle, and which fortunately are open to the public, appealed to me. My friend of the char-a-banc, whose name, by the way, was Mills, volunteered to accompany me, so we set forth, avoiding, as far as possible, the direction taken by others of our party. I remember being again greatly struck by my companion's enthusiasm for his profession. My knowledge of electro-plated goods is so small that I am afraid I rather failed to reciprocate his enthusiasm.

"To-morrow," he told me, "I go on to Exeter, a city which I have always found a little difficult. My firm expect me to get two large orders there. If only I could——"

We had turned off the main road, and were wandering down a narrower one where the beech trees gave place to ancient oaks, when we suddenly found ourselves in a circular clearing. In the middle we saw the ivy-covered remains of what had probably once been a wall and here we seated ourselves. Almost at our feet I noticed a round hole over which grass and weeds straggled. On my hands and knees I peered over the edge, and to my surprise noticed traces of brickwork, and the glint of water many feet below me.

I called to my companion, who joined me in the grass. It took a few moments to accustom our eyes to the gloom within, and as we lay peering into the depths a voice behind us startled me by saying:—

"Be careful, gentlemen."

We turned round and sat up in the grass, surprised to find a stranger standing immediately behind us.

"I must apologise," said the stranger, "for addressing you so abruptly, but I felt it incumbent on me to warn you that this is a well which is best left alone."

Looking back, I find it remarkable that I felt no resentment at his words. Why should we leave the well alone? We weren't doing it any harm

There was nothing peculiar about the man. He was obviously a gentleman; well and quietly dressed in a tweed suit; and yet there was something arresting about his presence; a radiation of personality, perhaps.

"If you could spare me a few minutes," the stranger continued, "I should like to explain."

To this we made some conventional reply, and the stranger sat down on a lichened stone.

"Excepting myself," said the stranger, "I doubt if anyone alive to-day knows that this is a wishing well. By some dispensation of Providence the well has not, nor ever had, a name, and so it has escaped a notoriety which its peculiar qualities amply justify. In a way this is fortunate, since the well attracts no attention, but it is also dangerous since, were anyone inadvertently to express a wish here out loud, that wish would undoubtedly be fulfilled."

"Surely," I said, thinking he was pulling our legs, "not an undesirable quality in a wishing well."

"Unfortunately," said the stranger, "the Influence, or shall we say spirit, of the well seems to possess a perverted sense of humour, and while taking care to grant your wish down to the smallest detail, contrives to do so in such a way that the result inevitably leads to disappointment. If you will let me I will give you a few instances, the accuracy of which I can vouch for personally."

We settled ourselves comfortably in the grass to listen. Somewhat to my annoyance I heard voices approaching, and from the wood emerged the poet-like man and his noisy girl companion. The latter, munching an apple, came up to the well, and without any apology stood listening to the stranger's story.

"I will begin," said the stranger, "with an incident which occurred in the reign of King Arthur——"

"When was that?" asked the girl, with her mouth full.

The stranger ignored her entirely. Had she not been there I might have made some comment on the statement that he could vouch for the incident personally. As it was I feared she might join in the discussion.

"Queen Isold," the stranger continued, "had lost her dearest friend, the Lady Bragwaine, who had disappeared mysteriously. Overcome with grief, she wandered in the forest and seated herself by this well. Here she bemoaned her hard lot and confided to the world at large (imagining herself to be alone) that her only wish was to discover the Lady Bragwaine.

"Almost immediately one, Sir Palamides, appeared and offered to restore the fair Bragwaine to her on certain conditions. In her desperate anxiety she consented, and in a short time Palamides returned with Bragwaine——"

"What were the conditions?" asked the girl, spitting out the core of her apple on to the grass.

The stranger rose to his feet.

"I regret, madam," he said, "that some of the details of this story are unsuitable for your ears."

"Don't mind me," giggled the girl.

"I am afraid I do, said the stranger.

"He thinks you're oo young," explained the poet.

"Go on!" cried the girl.

"I shall," said the stranger, and disappeared briskly into the wood.

I fancy my companion shared my annoyance. This horrible girl had spoiled our afternoon for us. Nothing remained but to return to the inn.

As we rose to go my companion with a laugh said, "I'm going to risk it," and addressed the well with the words, "I wish for orders. Two large ones in particular."

"Ow! listen to him," said the girl in a whisper like a fog-horn; "'e believes all that silly rot."

I imagine it was annoyance at her remark which made me exclaim:

"I want to write a successful novel."

The girl gave a shrill, neighing laugh. "And I want to get out of this rotten old country," she shouted. "The shiny East for me. Why 'aven't I got a pair of wings?"

As we turned our backs on her and started off I passed the poet, who muttered in a soft voice with all the fervency of a prayer:

"I hope it's the Far East."

. . . . .

Two years elapsed, and the incident of the wishing well had faded from my memory. In the restaurant car of the West Coast express I was just starting my luncheon when a man came in and seated himself opposite me. Recognition was mutual. It was the pleasant commercial traveller, Mills.

After the usual exchange of enquiries Mills suddenly exclaimed: "How often I have cursed that wishing well. What about you?"

As a matter of fact I had been working so hard that I had never thought about the well at all. I asked him to explain his animosity.

"You may remember," he said, "I wished for orders, two large orders especially."

"Yes," I replied. "Did you get them?"

He nodded. "I got them all right," he said with remarkable bitterness. "They came by post from the War Office ten days later. And they were large orders, too. The Order of San Salvador of Ecuador and the Order of St. Nicholas of Montenegro. I suppose they didn't know what to do with them."

"And what about the two orders you hoped to get in Exeter?" I asked him, remembering his enthusiasm for his profession.

"I failed miserably," he said.

I was too polite to laugh, but it was an odd coincidence. It struck me that the well had a distinct sense of humour. I tried to recall the incident and what it was I had wished for. I remembered. I wanted to write a successful novel.

(Continued on page 68)

You can't sleep if your nerves are busy!

HOW often does the worry and hustle of business so excite your nerves that sleep is out of the question? You go over the day's troubles again and again, and through miserable hours wait in suspense for the sleep that never comes.

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BY H. H. HARRIS

THE CHRISTMAS BUY-STANDER

(*Continued from page 64.*)

With something of a shock it came to me that I, too, had a strange story to tell. For my novel, "The Secret Bromide," published shortly after our visit to the well, had been an immense success, having run into ten editions or so. But its success had proved my undoing, for by mischance I had selected for one of my characters a name already borne by an elderly widow of singularly vindictive disposition. I became involved in an action for libel which cost me seven hundred pounds. My earnings for the book amounted all told to six hundred.

Curiously enough, I had never connected the incident with my visit to the well, but as I told the story to my companion the connection seemed clear enough. I, too, had provided sport for the well's impish sense of humour.

An idea occurred to me. "I should like," I told him, "to find that poet and his daughter. If the same sort of thing happened to them, I shall really believe that the well has supernatural powers."

"I know where he lives," said Mills; "he's not a poet—he's a butcher in Exeter."

"A butcher!" I exclaimed in surprise. "He certainly looked like a poet."

"Yes," said Mills, "a butcher. Swinburne's Hygienic Butchery. I've met him once or twice since. He lives alone now. His niece got married. That's the girl he had with him at the well."

"If you are going to Exeter, too," I suggested, "we might go and look him up together."

"By all means," said Mills.

Next afternoon my friend called for me at my hotel, and we proceeded to the hygienic butchery—an imposing establishment, in the upper floors of which Mr. Swinburne lived in great comfort

He received us with courtesy in a comfortably furnished sitting-room, and after hearing our stories burst out laughing.

"Now I've always blessed that well," he declared. "I was getting fair fed up with Tilly—that's my niece. I was afraid I should never find a young spark to take her off my 'ands—hands. Then a young Chinaman came along, and Tilly eloped with him. Always wanted to go to the East, she did. Well, she got 'er way."

"I fancy you did, too," I reminded him. "I remember your saying you hoped it would be the Far East."

"That's right," he said, with a hearty laugh. "The further the better. I've no wish to see 'er 'ere again."

"And is she contented?" I asked.

"Never contented nowhere. That's her style. But I haven't had any complaints lately. That old well did us to rights, anyway. Sorry it treated you gents so badly. Now we'll 'ave a spot of Scotch."

"Odd," I mused aloud; "I can't remember exactly what she wished for."

My companions couldn't remember her exact words either. Had she got just what she wished for? It looked like it. "Try and think back," I urged; for I had a curious feeling that in some way the well would have exercised its unpleasant tricks on those two also. In the few moments' silence which ensued while we set our memories to work I noticed a faint commotion in the hall downstairs. Suddenly the door opened with a bang, and in rushed the subject of our conversation.

I can still see the look of consternation on her uncle's face.

"Why, Tilly——" he gasped feebly.

The young lady flung herself into his arms. I pitied him. Eighteen months in China had in no way improved her appearance.

"The well!" whispered Mills to me; "still working——"

"I'm back for keeps, uncle," said Tilly. "I'm fed up with the East and Chinks. Exeter's good enough for me."

"But your husband——" protested her uncle feebly. "Augustus Soo will have something to say about this."

"Augustus Soo!" said Tilly, in a voice which vibrated with scorn. "His name never was Augustus. 'E just called himself that while he was over 'ere. His name is Soo Wing."

"What's that?" asked the butcher.

A noise from below like the love song of cats assailed our ears.

"The twins," said Tilly calmly. "I had to bring them with me. Proper little Chinks they are; a regular pair of Wings. What's up?"

In each of us three men a chord of memory had been touched. Simultaneously we all exclaimed:

"A pair of wings!"

We had remembered the exact words of Tilly's loudly expressed wish.

Now perhaps it will be understood why I decline to reveal the exact position of our wishing well. R. G.

By Jack Gordge

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KP

THE ASSASSIN TRAP

By
BASIL MACDONALD HASTINGS

Illustrations by
W. BRYCE HAMILTON

"I shall ask nothing. But Soloeta must die"

THE President of the Republic of Amazille was in danger. All presidents of this republic had to accustom themselves to that condition, and all had to scheme constantly to avoid death by violence.

The Chief of Police had brought the news of the latest plot.

"We got it, sir, as has often happened before, from a woman, and a very pretty woman, too. She stands in some sort of relationship to Soloeta."

"Ah, Soloeta is busy again, is he?"

"The scheme's a big one this time. They have got the machine-guns, according to this girl, and are collecting horses and motor-transport. The attempt is timed at present for August."

"Why does this girl play traitor?"

"Soloeta has ill-treated her."

"Exactly. He is a clever scoundrel in many ways, but an ass with women. A woman will ruin him—perhaps this woman. Can I see her?"

"She came to me at night and I made her go back. She must find out more for us."

"Quite right."

"I know how to get in touch with her, sir, and will arrange for her to come here one night if you wish it."

"I do."

The Police Chief saluted and went towards the door.

"By the way, Mesia, I don't want you to think that I am asking to see the girl because you said she was pretty."

"Certainly not, sir."

The President smiled and went to a mirror. He was a handsome man of mixed Spanish and Scottish blood, and looked younger than forty, his actual age. From his father Juan Terreros had inherited dark hair and a swarthy skin. From his Scottish mother he had tender eyes and tender mouth. Women were invariably excited by his appearance, though quickly repelled when they found that they were treated with little more than formal courtesy.

* * * * *

Three nights later a girl called Brida O'Reilly was shown into the President's sitting-room. He had just dined and now sat, in evening dress, at a desk where he read. The book in his hand was "The Way of all Flesh."

The girl was immediately impressed by the appearance of the man she had come to see. She looked behind her when the servant left the room, was sorry for a moment he had gone, and then, suddenly, was glad and proud that she was alone with this handsome male creature, ruler of his country.

Juan Terreros rose when she entered and went to the fire, carrying his book with a finger between the leaves. When the visitor faced him he took his finger from the leaves and put the book down.

"Do you know who I am?"

"Yes, sir."

"And your name is Brida O'Reilly. You'll tell me how that comes about."

"My father was Irish, sir, and he married a girl of Amazille."

"I never knew there were fair girls in Ireland."

"Indeed there are, sir. My father was a very fair man and my mother was not dark."

The President nodded. Of course a fair Irish girl was possible. But this Brida O'Reilly was so golden. Her comparatively poor clothes threw the light of her hair into relief. An astonishing visitor. Beautiful, too, in the way most men think of beauty.

"How do you come to be in touch with Soloeta?"

"He is distantly related to my mother. Before she died, penniless, she told me to write to this rich relative of ours. I did, and he told me to come out to Amazille and join his household."

"In what way, Miss O'Reilly? You don't mean as a servant."

"Not in name. I sit at his table. In fact, I am a slave. He made love to me at once. He beat me. My life is just . . . agony."

"He beat you? Badly?"

"I cannot tell . . . I can't show."

"And you are going back to him tonight?"

(*All rights strictly reserved*)

"I am."

"But I can't let you. I know you are helping me to get the best of a traitor, but you are making too great a sacrifice. Why do you do it?"

"For revenge."

Juan Terreros did not speak for some time. Then he nodded. "Yes, my child. I know the sweetness of that. But you are too young to know it. Too young to know that there is anything but love in the world."

"I am nearly eighteen."

Terreros smiled. "Eighteen! Ah me! The beginning of the end, eh?"

"It is the beginning of the end for Soloeta."

"I have an idea that it is. And I promise you that in that case it is the beginning of the end of your sufferings. I shall know how to reward you, Miss O'Reilly."

"I shall ask nothing. But Soloeta must die."

"Imprisonment for life is the legal penalty for what he is planning."

"Soloeta must die." She stood and pressed her right hand to her breast.

Terreros scrutinised her steadily for some time before he spoke again.

"I feel somehow, when you say that, that Soloeta will die."

* * * * *

Fernando Soloeta was the richest man in Amazille and also one of the least liked. The bulk of the population idolised Juan Terreros, their president, and by popular vote Soloeta had no chance of displacing him. But money can sometimes get what cannot be got for love. Soloeta distributed dollars with freedom and caution combined, and there were hundreds of disreputables at his beck and call.

The comings and goings at Soloeta's hacienda were, of course, noted by government spies, but of what actually went on in the house none knew but its occupants, and all were Soloeta's sworn allies save "the golden Irish girl," Brida O'Reilly.

Soloeta did not suspect this. He was a supreme egotist and imagined that the girl looked upon him as her benefactor. As for the beatings he gave her, were not women accustomed to such treatment? So confident was he of Brida's devotion that he would talk freely before her of the time to come.

"You'll be in the President's Palace one day, my golden girl. Remember what I say."

"I shall remember."

"I shall kill Terreros and rule."

"Could I help you?"

"What?" He roared with laughter. "You . . . you help me? Why, little flimsy, what could you do?"

"I don't know. But you do."

"You cannot ride. You cannot shoot. You cannot use a knife, I'll wager. Women are no killers."

"There must be another way of helping."

"Then tell me it."

"First I must see this man, this Terreros."

"That is easy. He frequently appears in public. Opens parks, goes to reviews, and all that sort of thing."

"Then why don't you kill him when he does that."

"Useless. I must have at hand the power to quell his friends. In August I shall have it."

"And it is now June. You can afford to wait?"

"Of course I can. Be sure I shan't strike till I'm certain of success."

"And how will you strike?"

"The plan is not yet made, and in any case it's not for your ears."

"Would it be part of your plan to assassinate Terreros in public and then bring your troops to ride down his defenders?"

"That is the way it might go."

"Who will kill Terreros?"

"The honour is not yet allocated."

"Why not choose me?"

"You . . . Have you the pluck for that?"

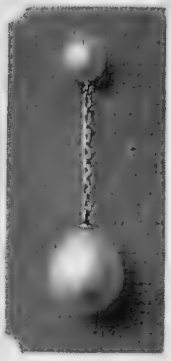
"I should then have played my part."

"Dios! . . . You'd do that for me?

(Continued on page 74)

"The cheering swelled stronger and stronger. And out to face it came Juan Terreros"

THE GIFT OF HER CHOICE



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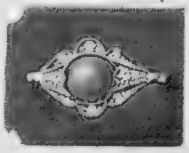

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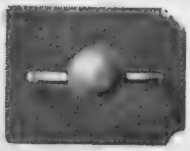

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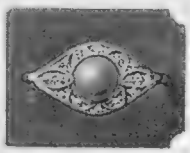

532. A new design. Selected Ciro Pearl set in platinette with scientific Diamonds. Gold shank.
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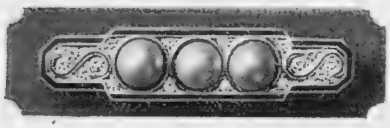

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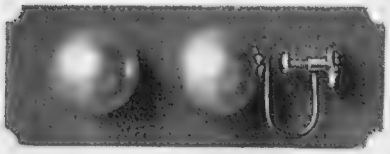

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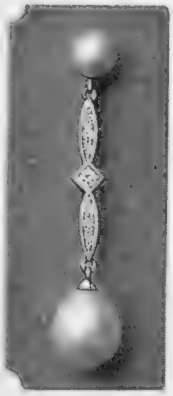

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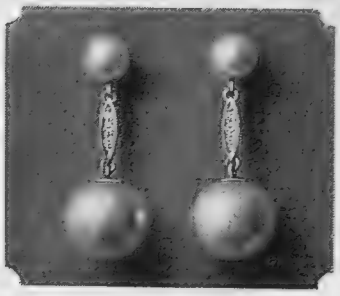

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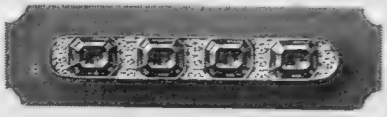

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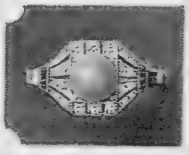

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Longer Necklets at proportionate prices.

"It had suddenly come to her that she had kissed him for the last time"

(Continued from page 72)

A woman. And why not a woman? It would be easier for a woman. She could get closer without being suspected. You are not known in the town. Heavens, yes. You could approach him with flowers or a petition for something. But you might be killed."

"I might."

"Yes, yes. But still you would be less likely to be killed than a man. Men hesitate before knifing a woman, however she may have angered them. In the time of hesitation the police could surround you. A man would go down before the crowd at once."

"Let me see Terreros. Take me in the crowd when next he appears in public."

"That is easy. The new cathedral opens on Sunday and he goes to the first High Mass. We will wait on the steps when he comes out and you shall see him close."

"Good. Afterwards you will know how it is that I might help you."

* * * * *

On the following Sunday morning Fernando Soloeta washed himself to a serenade of revolver shots. He grinned as he listened.

"The little Irish one is very determined on her butchery," he muttered. "Ah, well, we shall see."

To breakfast Brida came late.

"You waste my cartridges, yellow-flower. Come, kiss me."

Brida kissed him. After she had kissed him, she stared at him. It had suddenly come to her that she had kissed him for the last time. He startled her with a pinch which brought agony. She had now had her last bruise from him. Brida sat down and drank a little coffee.

"Well, can you shoot straight yet?"

"I hit the fence-post at about fifteen of my strides."

"Very good with that little weapon of yours. You would not do it with mine."

"No. I tried with yours this morning."

"The devil you did! Who said that you might?"

"Ought I to have asked? I only used two cartridges."

"Of course you should have asked. Supposing I have to use it and do not know that two shots have been fired. It might cost me my life."

Brida sat silent. It would be a pity if he reloaded his automatic. In the end, she was sure, it would make no difference, but suspicion might be aroused, and that would make the job less perfect. Brida steered the talk to the opening of the new Cathedral.

"It has taken five years to build and it will take another five years to equip. Terreros has the honour of opening it. I shall have the honour of closing it."

"You will close it?"

"My dear, I am only Catholic in name. I shall work with no priests and I shall have no state religion. If the Bishop conforms to my wishes I will let him have his Cathedral. If not, I close it, and reopen it perhaps as a temple of art. Religion is all-powerful. Art is harmless. There is going to be only one all-powerful person in Amazille."

"Is it wise to make so many enemies?"

"No. But the church would thwart me, thwart me at every turn. Do you know that its power is so great that my men, my own scoundrels, will not fight on a Sunday. It has always been so in Amazille. We murder only on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. On Sundays we go to mass and would not box another man's ears." He laughed uproariously.

"I had wondered why you were willing to mix with the crowd and take me close to the President. Spies will be watching you."

"They will, but they know that I am as Amazillean as they. On Sundays the lion lies with the lamb. Get your hat."

Brida put on a hat and also a coat.

(Continued on page 78)

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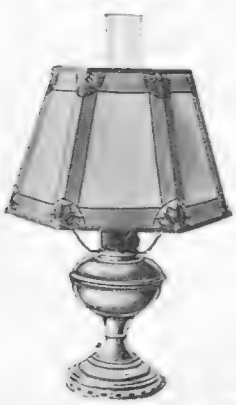

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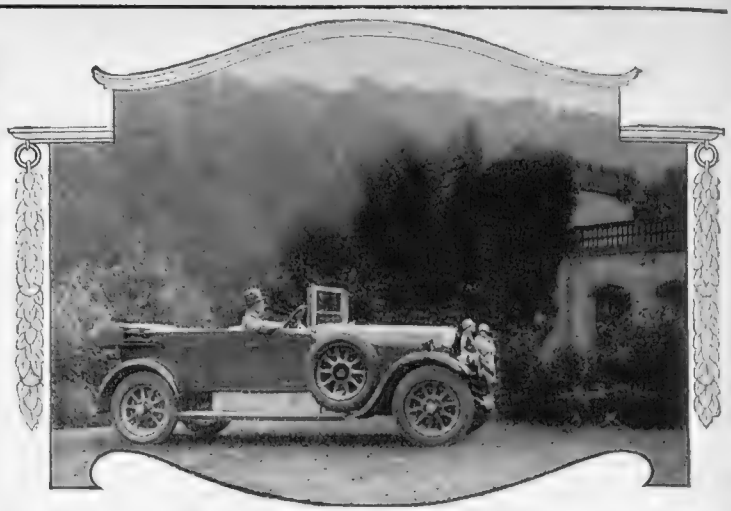

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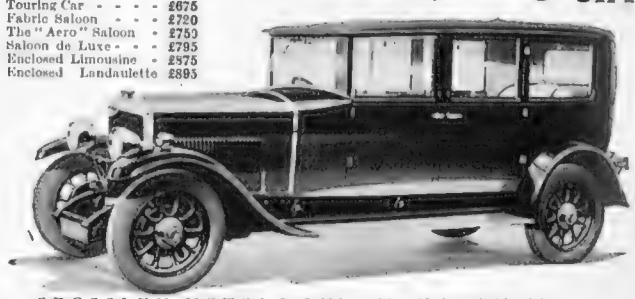

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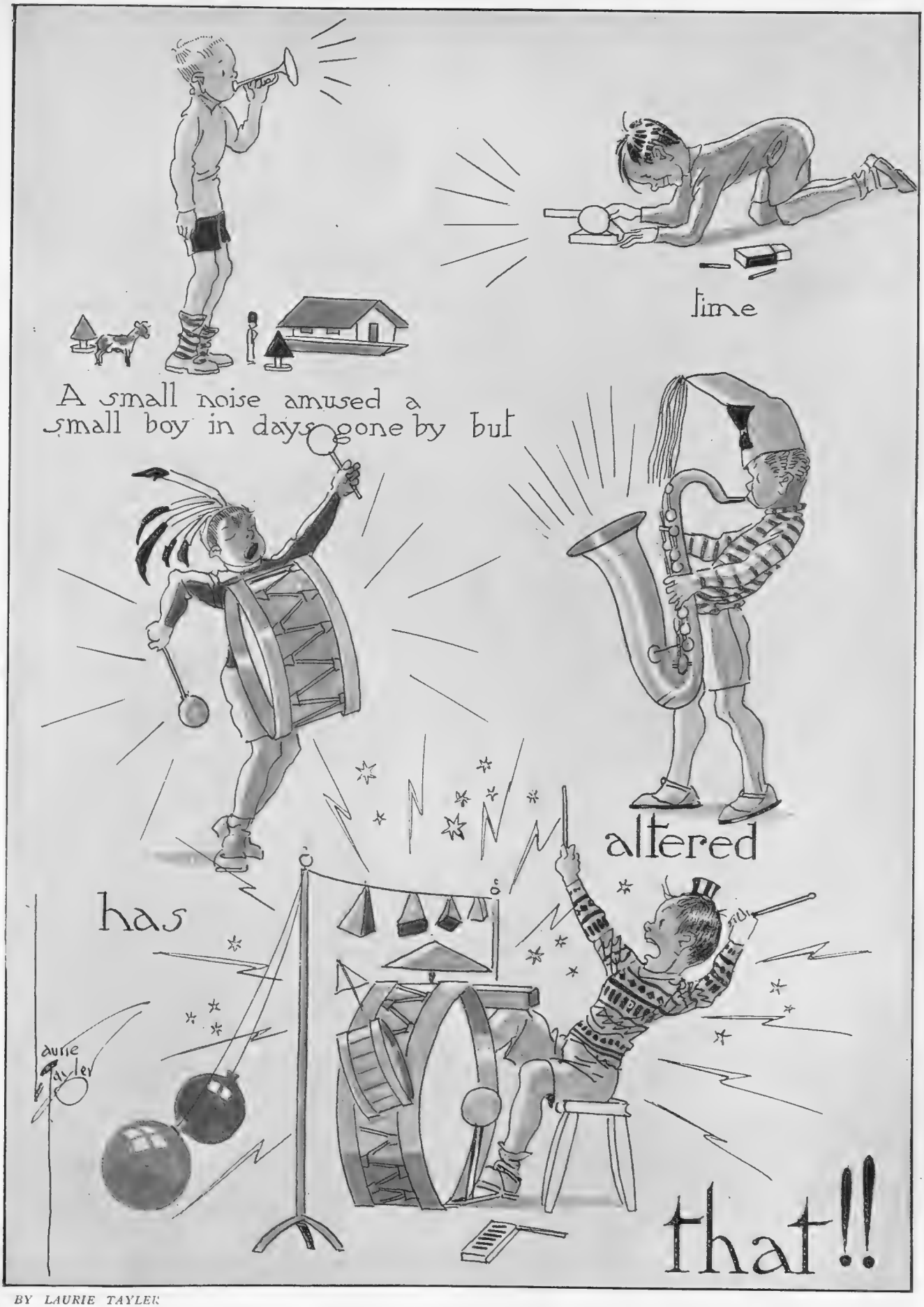


BY LAURIE TAYLER

"THE LITTLE MORE AND OH HOW MUCH IT IS!"

(Continued from page 74)

"Why that coat? It is a warm day."

"I feel frozen. Feel my hand." Soloeta touched it. It was indeed as cold as someone dead.

"Come, then." They set forth. Brida kept her hands in the side pockets of her coat. In the right-hand pocket was the small automatic given her by Soloeta and in the left was Soloeta's own heavier weapon.

* * * * *

The new cathedral was so crowded that Soloeta and Brida had great difficulty in finding places. They had to be content in the end to kneel on cold stone, which made Soloeta scowl and rage. Brida did not look at him. As a decent Irish Catholic she prayed fervently all the time, asking forgiveness not only for the sins she had committed, but alas! also for the sin she was about to commit. A college of cardinals might have frowned upon her inconsistency, but she was simple and sweet and Irish, and, when that is said, all is understood.

The President of Amazille knelt at the altar, and Brida could not see him. He also prayed, and very earnestly, for he knew that Brida was going that day to risk her life for him. He needed sustaining in the coming hour, for it had been necessary for him to agree to make no sign if Brida died.

When the last blessing had been given and mass was over, the congregation streamed out to the accompaniment of noble music on the great organ. The President still knelt. It was his part to leave the cathedral last so that all might see him and acclaim him. Never in his life had Juan Terreros felt less like being acclaimed by the populace.

Soloeta pulled Brida into a good place on the steps. Police lined a path down the great flight, and Soloeta and the girl were close to the guards. They were surrounded by numbers of devout admirers of Terreros, among whom were a few of Mesia's police in plain clothes.

The crowd chattered as the crowd always chatters on these occasions.

"Aren't we lucky to be so near?"

"We'll get a splendid view of him."

"I hope he looks this way. Mother says he has such a sweet smile."

"I could see him from where I was kneeling, and he looked very pale."

"The bishop is to come out with him, I believe. Possibly that may slightly delay his departure."

"The bishop is to lunch at the Palace. He looked proud, don't you think? A great day for him."

"Look, they're coming. Ah, look at those lovely children. Isn't that charming? Isn't that perfectly sweet?"

Pretty little girls in white frocks and wearing wreaths of flowers tripped down the steps throwing roses over which the President might pass. A great noise began, coming out of thousands of throats.

The cheering swelled stronger and stronger. And out to face it came Juan Terreros.

He carried his hat in his hand. He bowed to left and right and, though he smiled, he looked deathly pale. The bishop who followed him closely looked bucolically rubicund.

When Terreros was exactly abreast of Brida and Soloeta two shots rang out in rapid succession. There was a moment of utter silence. Then a woman's voice pierced through.

"Beast! Murderer! . . . You did it. . . . I saw him. . . . Look, look! His pistol!"

An automatic revolver lay at the astounded Soloeta's feet: it was the one from which Brida had fired two shots in the orchard that morning.

"Scoundrel! Assassin!" yelled the crowd. Men leapt upon Soloeta, and quiet-looking persons employed by Mesia deftly surrounded Brida. Uniformed police promptly massed round the President, who stood calm and still smiling by the side of the bishop.

"He fired at our President! Who is it? Soloeta! Soloeta! Death to Soloeta!"

The first blow aimed at the utterly bewildered Soloeta had been upon the mouth. It injured him so that he could scarcely cry out a protest. But he struck back. He was a mighty man, and he sent several of his fellow Amazilleans reeling.

Then came knives. The police did not interfere. Presently men with blood on their hands and faces stood round a horribly mangled corpse.

* * * * *

That night Brida was brought to the President.

"Your first shot singed my hair," frowned Juan Terreros.

Brida gasped and clutched at a chair for support.

"But I fired yards above you."

"Obviously you should have aimed at me, Brida."

"Oh, sir! And I had practised, practised hard."

Terreros allowed himself to smile broadly. He came close to the girl.

"What is to be your reward, Brida?"

"Sir, can you give me work? I can type, and I am sure I'd learn secretarial work very quickly. And can I work here? It's here I want to be."

"And why here particularly, my dear?"

"Because of something Soloeta said."

"And what was that?"

"He promised that I should be in the President's Palace one day. I'd love that to come true."

"It has come true, Brida. And in the President's Palace you may have any position, from the highest to the lowest."

"How could I be the highest? I have no training. I must begin in the lowest post, sir."

"As the wife of the President you would be first in the President's eyes."

Both remained silent. Then Brida rose to go.

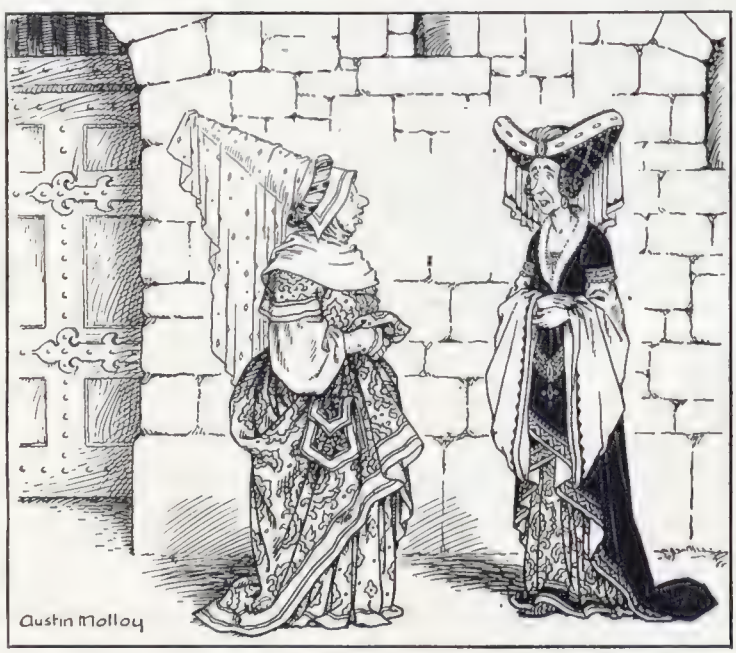
Terreros followed her to the door.

"Speak, dear, speak. I've taken an unfair advantage, I know. But I've thought of nothing but you since the evening we first met. Will you be my wife?"

A very pale Brida lifted her face to his.

"If that is the best way I can serve you, sir." The President stretched out his arms. Then he trembled as he absorbed the sweetness of her face. He touched her dress and sank on his knees at her feet.

B. M. H.



A SHARP LESSON By Austin Molloy

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"The Queen of Hearts, was baking tarts, The King was— wooing BIRD'S"

"There is no way," he said slowly, "unless——"

LE JEU EST FAIT

By ARTHUR APPLIN *Illustration by FRANK OLDHAM*

EVERYONE liked playing at Rudolf's table, that is to say, everyone who could afford it, for Rudolf had a personality. Even when he walked across the Casino to take his place at Table Nineteen strangers turned to look at him. His features were irregular but finely cut; he had the fair hair of the Saxon brushed straight off his low, narrow forehead like a flame. He walked with a slight limp and carried other souvenirs of the Great War—one a gash from the high cheek bone to jaw. When he held out the cards to be cut it was with the air of a king offering his hand to a lady of his court. He possessed the gift of flattering women subtly and apparently unconsciously; his clothes had the cut of Savile Row and his linen was irreproachable. Men as well as women achieved a certain distinction by playing at his table, and his *changeur* was an able lieutenant.

One evening just as Rudolf had taken his seat and was beginning to shuffle the cards he heard a voice behind his chair ask the *changeur* if he couldn't find her a place. While his lieutenant was explaining it was utterly impossible, Rudolf glanced in the mirror across the room. Mirrors he knew lied like those who sought to be flattered by them; nevertheless, when he saw the blurred outline of the speaker he whisked the Duchess de Poullies' card from her place and, without turning his head, said: "If Madame does not object to being number one ——"

"Thank you," Lala Barrie said.

She was beautiful and she was young. She wore a Chanel frock and a single row of real pearls. On her place she laid a small vanity case, a thin cigarette case of gold and platinum, and a gold lighter, three pyramids of chips and five packets of new mille notes in their elastic bands.

"Faites vos jeux, Messieurs et Mesdames!"

As Rudolf passed her the shoe their hands accidentally touched. He looked at her and she smiled at him. Strange that he smelt the perfume of the roses of Chenonceaux (where he had been born of an English father and a French mother)—a son of Touraine he always called himself—the country of golden wine and red roses.

Surrounded by lovely women, intoxicating perfumes and the outward and visible signs of wealth and luxury and love, Rudolf, sitting on his daïs of deal wood, was far removed from this world in which he played a leading part as a king—and just as lonely.

Lala started the bank with forty mille. He watched the turn and fall of the cards with even more interest than she showed, though he sensed she was anxious to win. She played a good game, concealing her chagrin when she lost, taking a cigarette delicately from her case and lighting it with a gesture.

When the shoe was finished she remained sitting at the table watching him shuffle the cards. Rudolf was proud of his quickness and dexterity. She said quietly, so that only he could hear:

"How wonderful!"

"L'habitude, Ma'moiselle."

"If I could do that I should win a fortune."

He paused a moment, his long, nervous fingers just moving over the shining backs of the cards, touching them almost affectionately.

"It must be great fun being a croupier. Those cards must be like children to you. I suppose you know them all?"

He looked at her gravely, then smiled—she was so beautiful.

"The devil's children, Ma'moiselle, not mine; and this is the devil's playground."

"I love it," she said.

At three o'clock in the morning when play ceased she had lost all her counters and only four or five mille notes remained. She thrust them carelessly into her vanity case, lit another cigarette and got up.

(*All rights strictly reserved*)

"I'm not lucky, am I?"

Rudolf ran his fingers along the well-worn palette:

"There is a proverb . . ."

She laughed as she moved away: "Then I ought to win at cards. Please keep the same place for me for to-morrow night." He thought he heard her say as she moved away—"*Bon soir, Monsieur!*"

When he left the Casino he stood for a few moments listening to the sea rolling the pebbles up and down the shore. He watched the moonlight on St. Honorat and St. Marguerite. Those two islands always possessed magic and mystery for him. They sat in the opal green waters of the bay just outside Cannes, yet utterly aloof from everything she represented.

A shadow fell between him and the islands. Rudolf recognised her at once though her back was towards him, and as she moved away he followed. When she reached the Place he drew alongside her and took off his hat:

"Ma'moiselle is alone. May I be permitted to see her to her hotel?"

They walked past the market up the steep hill that led to the Continental. When they reached the door in the wall which surrounded the hotel gardens he held it open for her. She passed through, so he followed. As the door clanged darkness surrounded them. Mimosa trees met overhead and fern palms threw shadows like giant hands on the gravel path bordered with flowers—primroses, violets, anemones.

"Since the war I've never met adventure until now," he said.

"And now?"

The path was narrow as well as steep; it proved an excuse for taking her arm.

"This is a wonderful adventure for me." He could see her face because it was so white and her eyes because they were vivid, almost the colour of the waters around his magic islands. She didn't laugh as most women would have done. She didn't speak until they reached the terrace; they walked along it and leant over the stone balustrade. Below the town stretched, curved cosily beneath the hills like a woman asleep; the lamps had gone out, but the stars still shone in the sea.

"I should have thought your business would have robbed you of imagination," she said.

"It has robbed me of everything worth having but that."

"I have never seen so many flowers as there are in this garden. . . . What *is* worth having?"

"Whatever a man lacks most."

She shrugged her shoulders and turned her back on the horizon, pale at the coming of day. She sat on the balustrade and looked at him. It was the moment when night and day meet like lovers surreptitiously for a last passionate embrace.

"I want money," she said, "for with that one can satisfy all one's desires."

"Love?"

Then she did laugh, and her voice was like the sea he had heard rolling the pebbles to and fro, playing with dangerous forces:

"Love, Monsieur—what is it?"

"A dream, perhaps—but you must have known it. One so beautiful couldn't have escaped."

The perfume of the garden was going to his head. It flung a hundred odours into the air, which he breathed as a man drinks wine knowing he is becoming intoxicated. At his feet he saw the Casino dark and menacing. There, night after night, and at Aix, Deauville, and Biarritz, he had watched women exchanging youth and beauty for the chance of winning a handful of notes. He had despised them, not even feeling pity. This woman was different—but for how long, he wondered.

She looked up at him smiling. He felt an almost irresistible desire to pick her up in his arms and carry her off. Perhaps her laughter stopped him. As if reading his thoughts she repeated: "With money one can purchase all one desires."

Rudolf put his hands behind his back—those hands she had admired because they were swift and cunning. He reminded himself that he subsisted on the good will of women who played at his table.

As she slipped to her feet she said: "I shall get my 'running bank' before you find the woman of your dreams." Then she moved away along the flowered path through the sentinel trees, quickly like a shadow chased by the moonlight.

When he followed she disappeared, and he saw the night porter closing the doors of the hotel.

Rudolf did not sleep until sunrise; Lala Barrie filled his thoughts. When in desperation he rang at nine o'clock for his coffee and rolls he knew he was no longer merely a croupier, the perfect machine, but a man the imperfect likeness of a god. Wasted the years he had devoted to mechanical precision and the savings bank. Last night he had seen Lala throw away more than he had saved in a lifetime. She would ruin herself. In a few years' time he would see her punting with twenty francs or with feverish fingers throwing little metal coins on the *petit chevaux* table. But she was worth saving, he thought, as he walked along the Boulevard de la Croisette, warmed by the sunshine. She was utterly different from all the other women he had seen, and Heaven knew he had met enough of them! In her eyes, so like the sea, there was a soul.

He made his way to the harbour; the lovely yachts with their slender masts pricking the sky always fascinated him, for they presented adventure and romance. It seemed so strange they should lie idle there, held in the cold arm of the stone pier with the unknown calling them over the edge of the horizon.

A motor boat was starting for the islands, and he stepped on board. Practically everyone got off at St. Marguerite, but he went on to St. Honorat, which fitted with his mood, for here only the monks had lived for centuries. In the centre of the island there was a cathedral of pine and fir trees. On the south side, adjoining the hidden garden of the monastery, a vineyard with groves of olives and oranges. Alongside the jetty, where the boats stopped, a hut with tables beneath the trees where visitors were allowed to lunch on such fare as the island offered and golden wine made by the monks.

The moment Rudolf plunged into the wood silence surrounded him. Not the note of a bird, only faintly the sound of the sea from numerous small lagoons. His feet crushed delicious perfumes from the undergrowth. The brothers were working in the vineyard with bowed heads, for their order imposed silence upon them even as the island.

As he reached his favourite lagoon, a bay of crystal water surrounded by rocks where the surf hung a dazzling net of diamonds, he stopped, drew back a step instinctively, and remained standing as if on the threshold of a dream, unable to go on or retreat. Before him Aphrodite had risen from the sea. An instant only he saw her divine in her beauty, then, as if conscious of his presence, she dropped out of sight and disappeared. . . .

A few moments later he recognised Lala Barrie in a green and black swimming suit plunge into the lagoon. He watched her swim to the far side, climb a rock and stand against the shining net of surf. She waved to him:

"*Bon jour, Monsieur.*"

He stood bare-headed, thrilled by her beauty. The water seemed her natural element. When she came ashore he retreated, and, sitting on a fallen tree, waited for her. They walked across the island to the little hut, and, the tables inviting an appetite, Rudolf ordered a dish of olives, *langouste*, an omelette and salad, wild strawberries and a bottle of the island wine.

She asked his name, playing with it when he told her, almost as she played with the *langouste* her lips tasted so appreciatively.

(*Continued on page* vi)

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BY STAN TERRY

TWO FOR IT!

(*Continued from page* ii)

"It suits you. Names ought to express their owners. Now, could I have been called anything else but Lala?"

"What does it mean?"

The table was small; the wine had the scent and subtlety of the island; they were so close they could not avoid touching one another.

"I think it means the child of fortune—or misfortune, perhaps, since I have only a few hundred mille left to continue the fight."

"Then leave before the *cagnotte* takes your last louis—because it will."

She laughed at him—told him gaily it would have to be all or nothing. Rudolf tried to convince her she was playing a fool's game. She refused to be convinced; anyway, it was too late, for she had reached the point when it was no use drawing back. She confided in him, and the story of her life aroused the chivalry which had been dead since the war. She was the only child of her parents, who died four years ago and left her a mere competence. She had lived on the capital, hoping something would turn up. The only thing that had turned up was a rich and unwelcome suitor. To avoid him she was wooing the goddess of chance.

"I would rather steal a fortune than marry it, wouldn't you?"

He prepared a peach for her while she watched, fascinated by the delicacy of the fingers which nightly conjured with cards and mille notes. . . .

"Tell me," she said, "there must be some way of winning at chemmy? I don't want much—just enough to make me independent."

He passed her the peach.

"How clever you are," she said. "So few men would take the trouble."

He was twining his fingers together. She watched him through half-closed eyes as she put a portion of peach between her lips. He was thinking her mouth had all the fragrance and perfection of the fruit.

"There is no way," he said slowly, "unless——" He looked over the bent head at the sea quivering in the heat of the midday sun.

"Unless——" she said softly, her lips wet with the peach's juice.

"I love you, Lala!" He waited for her laughter—but it didn't come.

She said: "We were speaking of cards."

"At which you are unlucky! If you were lucky enough to strike a combination of cards to give you a run, say, ten or twelve coups——?"

She didn't speak; silence sat with them. The other guests had departed. The waiter, leaving coffee and liqueurs, withdrew; to St. Honorat only lovers came. From a window of the hut the white-capped cook, perspiring, watched them with hot envy: "That's Rudolf," he said to his assistant. "All the women at the Casino try to fool him, but they never succeed. He can pick and choose, but he prefers to conjure with cards rather than hearts."

And Rudolf was thinking a great and terrible thought; truly he could conjure with cards. They were his children; he knew them all by heart. They responded to the touch of his nervous fingers, telling them before he saw their faces what he would find.

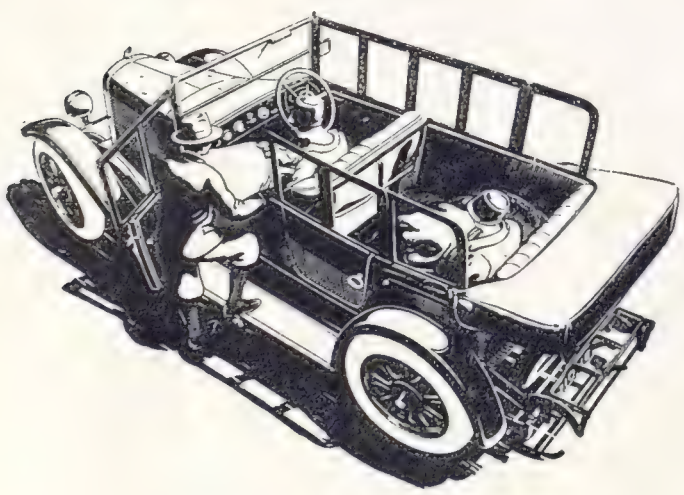
Lala raised her liqueur to her lips; they invited him. He saw the colour of her eyes—it was like looking over the edge of a rocking boat into the green bed of the sea.

He leant across the table, and as he did so he felt the gentle pressure of her knees. He touched her hand with his fingers and he saw her start. "If I could——"

"You can." She got up quickly and moved away. "I want to go now, please. This island makes me feel afraid—there's enchantment in it."

A noisy motor boat took them back to Cannes, and they sat together in the

(*Continued on page* x)



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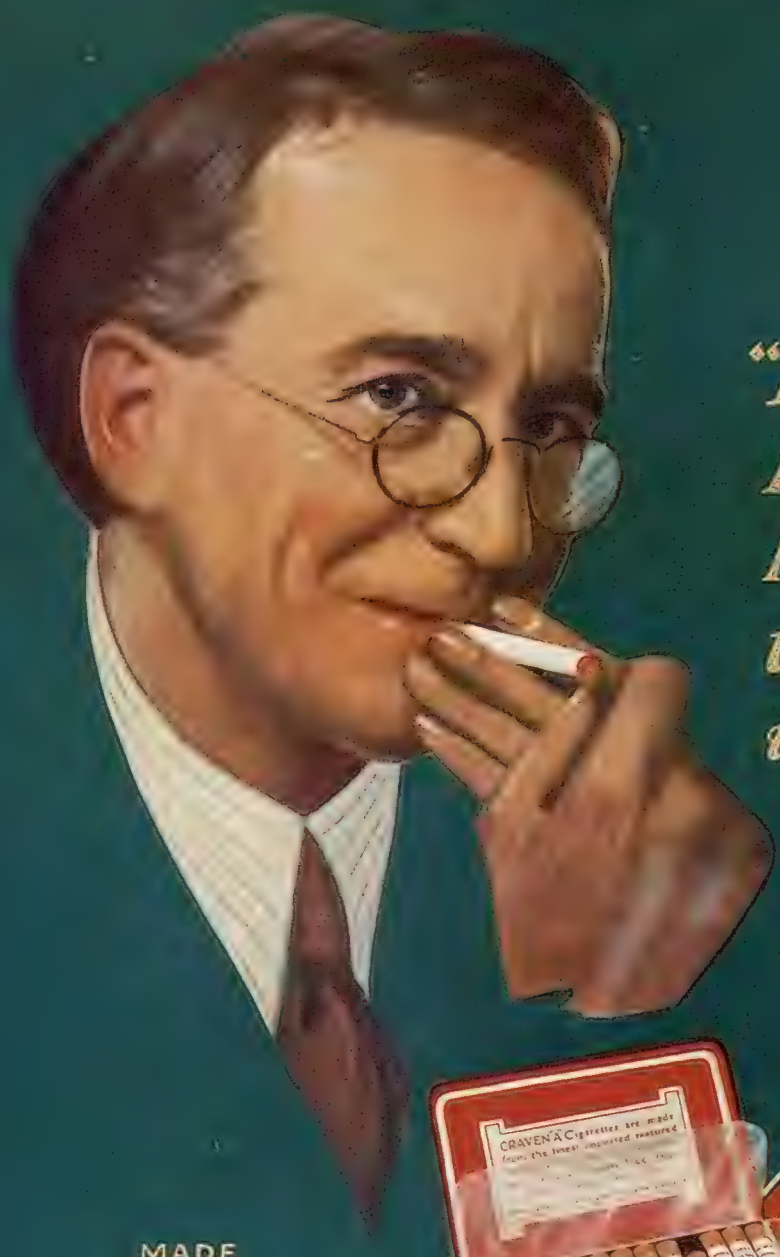

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CHRISTMAS CONTRASTS

By CHRISTOPHER GRAVILLE

1827

THE log fire is throwing its glow round the hall,
Whilst the snow drives in flurries outside;
And the oak tables bear all the richest of fare
To honour the new Christmastide.
The garlands of holly and mistletoe hold
A message of joy and good cheer,
Whilst the voices of waits at the old manor gates
Hymn the happiest day of the year.

The head of the family, hearty and bluff,
Presides at the feast that is spread;
Whilst the homely toasts pass to the clink of the glass
That gleams with its freight ruby red.
By post-chaise and coach they have come to take part
In making the hours bright and gay,
For no one would miss an occasion like this
To unite on a bright Christmas Day.

1927

THE steam pipes are throwing their fumes round the hall,
Whilst the rain falls in torrents outside;
No tables now bear any trace of good fare
To honour the new Christmastide.
No holly or mistletoe hang from the walls—
The maids say they make too much work—
But the wireless brings cheer—"An address you'll now hear
On 'The Lesser-known Weeds of Dunkirk.'"

The head of the family gloomy and pale
Is the only one left in the place;
His wife's dining out, and his son's not about—
He's up West and is going the pace.
His daughter and nephews, his cousins and aunts
Have gone their own ways for the day—
And he'd have gone, too, if he hadn't the 'flu
Or could find enough money to pay!

Illustrated by CUNINGHAM

(Continued from page vi)

stern. When Lala left him she said: "I shall wait until my hour comes. Then I shall risk everything."

"Does one ever know that hour?"

She held his hand. "You will know it. You must tell me."

That night and every succeeding night when Rudolf returned from the Casino to his rooms he took three packs of cards from his cupboard, and, throwing them on the table, shuffled them and laid them out in little packs as he would in the baccara room; and the chosen pack, the one he had made up last, he put into the middle of the complete pack, then gave it to an imaginary player to cut, put the cards in an imaginary shoe and played against an imaginary opponent. Always he won the first ten coups. Again and again he did this until he was certain failure was impossible.

Every night Lala played at his table, but only for an hour. And every day they met as if by accident on St. Honorat. Then he would smoke a cigarette and pretend to read Verlaine while she swam in the lagoon, and afterwards they would lunch beneath the trees and talk of many things, of dreams and voyages and freedom; of everything but cards.

One day she said to him as they trailed their fingers in the water while the motor boat carried them back to Cannes: "I am so happy. I feel my hour has come—and yours, Rudolf?"

"Only you can give it to me."

Her cheek brushed his face, her head rested on his shoulder for an instant: "Do you really want me so much?"

"You are more to me than anything else in the world."

He took her fingers, wet with the sea, and held them to his lips: "To-night, if you are ready to risk everything."

"Everything."

"Take your usual place, but wait for the second shoe before staking the maximum. Let your bank run nine times. I shall be waiting for you with a car outside at three o'clock. You'll be there?"

Her eyes answered and her fingers caressed him.

. . . . . .

Rudolf stepped lightly into his high chair above Table Nineteen, delicately shuffled the cards, held them out to be cut, and placed them in the shoe. Lala arrived only just in time, took her place a little breathlessly, hesitated a moment before putting the minimum allowed in the bank. It ran three times. Rudolf sensed she was nervous. She glanced at him, but his face was expressionless, wearing the clay-like mask of the croupier. She ran it once more, then pushed the shoe away. It raced around the table three times, only two banks running, until it stopped at number nine, and, examining it, Rudolf declared there were not enough cards for another coup.

As Lala got up he heard her say: "I shall be waiting."

His eyes remained on the cards as his fingers, moving with almost incredible swiftness, shuffled them to and fro, turning the faced cards over. Now he made them into packs. For an instant his eyes swept the room; no one at his table at all; the *changeur* busy at his desk. He took a little longer in putting the cards together for the last pack, though even an *habitué* watching would not have noticed it.

"*Prenez vos places, table numéro dix-neuf,*" the *changeur* announced. The cards in one long pack were now neatly held between the fingers of Rudolf's right hand. He gave the player at number five the little red card with which to cut them, smiling as he did so. His voice was almost caressing: "*Madame, s'il vous plaît?*"

She placed it just where he desired she should—just as a conjurer can force

(Continued on page xiv)

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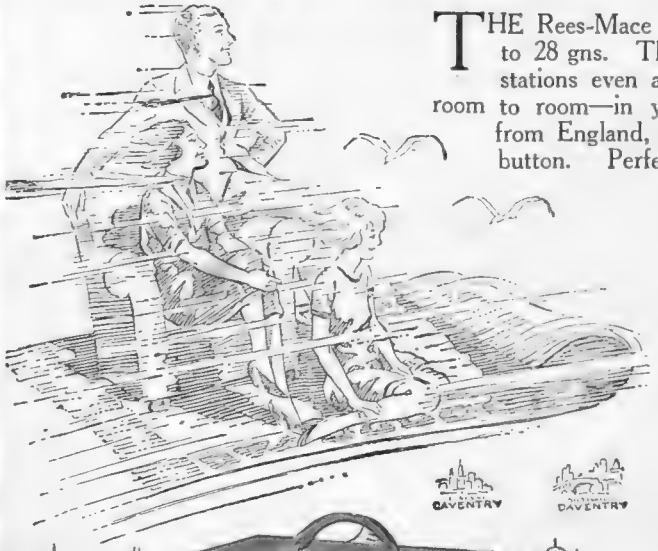

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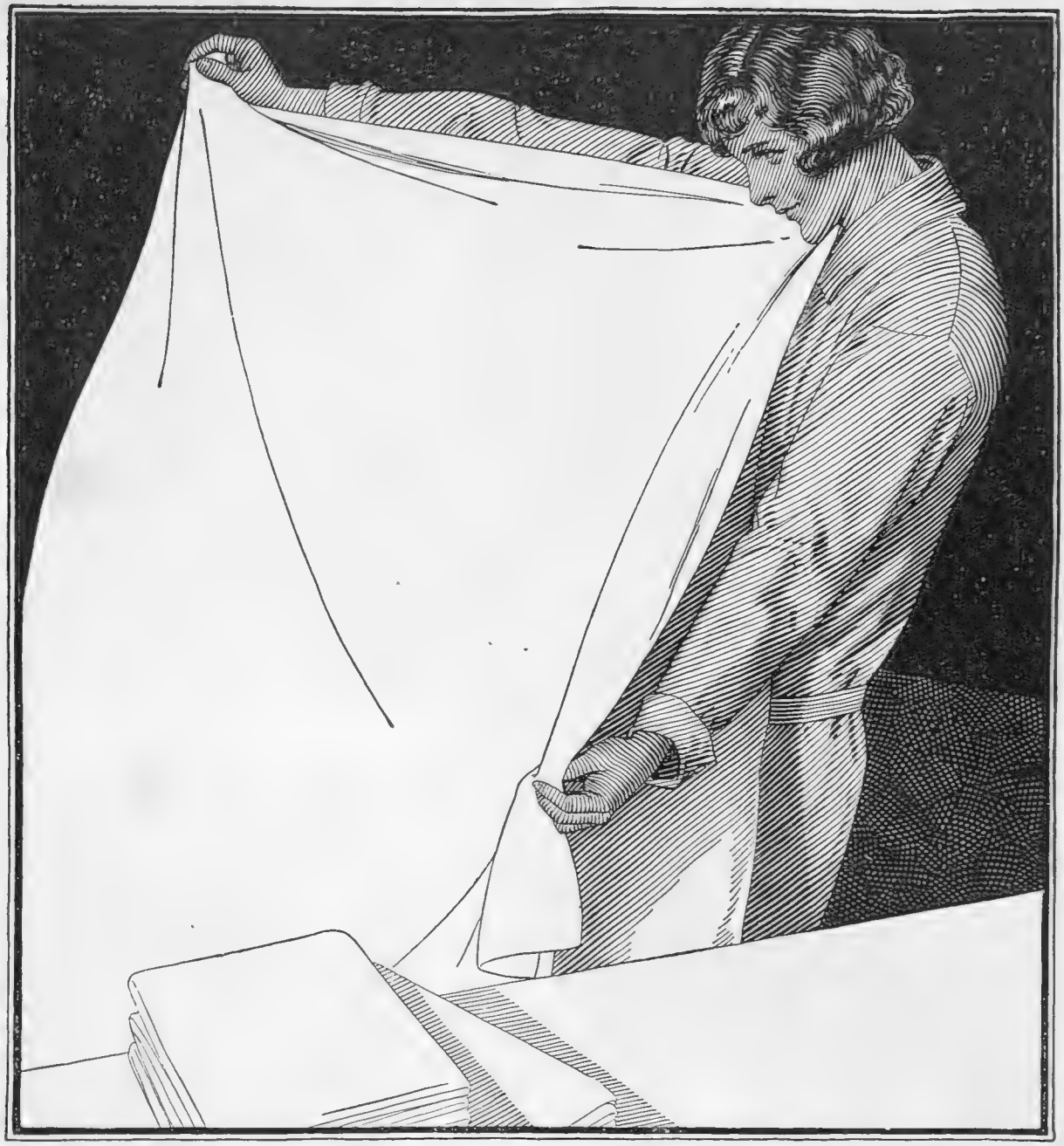

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(Continued from page x)

a card upon one of his audience. Laying the cards in the shoe he put it in readiness at place number one. Again Lala came late to the table; she took her seat laughing with a little gesture of apology, announced twenty mille in the bank, then, as if at sudden inspiration, doubled it to forty mille. When she turned her cards over she found a natural—nine. She turned up three naturals running, then won on a seven—again on a two against baccara. Three more naturals followed. A crowd began to collect around the table. At the ninth coup she hesitated, as if she would pass the bank. "Courage," someone playing at the table said.

"Very well," she laughed gaily, "once more."

The gallery and the punters standing behind the players' chairs pressed forward eagerly. There was silence as the punter asked for a card and Lala slowly turned hers over. But Rudolf's face resembled more than ever that of a clay mask—a death mask one woman thought as she saw it for a moment through the haze of cigarette smoke.

"*Huit à la banque,*" he announced indifferently and with his palette picked up the cards and tossed them lightly and with wonderful precision into the receptacle before him. Already players were staking their next coups. Lala's hand touched, inadvertently perhaps, the shoe and Rudolf announced: "*La main passe.*" With two swift movements of his palette he collected the plaques and poured them on to Lala's place, then the bundles of notes in their elastic bands. The basket the *changeur* brought was filled to the brim. Lala lit a cigarette and, rising, went to count her winnings. The audience of onlookers drifted away to wait for the next sensation. The bank was for sale; the game recommenced. Rudolf's voice cried mechanically: "*Quarante mille francs. Faîtes vos jeux, Messieurs et Mesdames, faîtes vos jeux. Banco est fait.*"

When Lala returned to the table she only brought with her a few plaques. She played with alternating luck for another hour or so, then with a little yawn she got up, said good-night to the player on her right, and walked away. As she reached the door she turned and looked at Rudolf. His eyes met hers through the clay mask.

"*Le jeu est fait. Rien ne va plus,*" he cried gaily, so that all the players looked at him and smiled. An hour later he was relieved, and, picking up his little box and his wand he bowed gracefully, as was his custom, and retired.

In a quarter of an hour he had changed. Turning up the collar of his great coat and pulling his hat over his eyes he went out. A hundred yards from the Casino he began to run. He was no longer a croupier, he was a man; but as he ran to the market-place where Lala was waiting for him in the car he felt the thrilling ardour of a boy in pursuit of his first love; she was his first love.

As he dashed across the boulevard, dark beneath the shadow of the trees, he heard the warning shriek of a motor car. He turned quickly just in time to avoid a red Hispano. He laughed as it swerved and he heard the grinding of brakes.

In the lighted interior he saw two lovers—they, too, were running away to the land of heart's desire. He saw them for an instant, and again as the chauffeur straightened the car—the woman leaned forward and, looking at him, laughed. Then she and the car were swallowed in the darkness.

Rudolf stood staring stupidly at the little red eye of the tail lamp winking at him through the darkness. The woman who had laughed was Lala. He stretched out his hands, groped feebly as if for his palette: "*Le jeu est fait.*"

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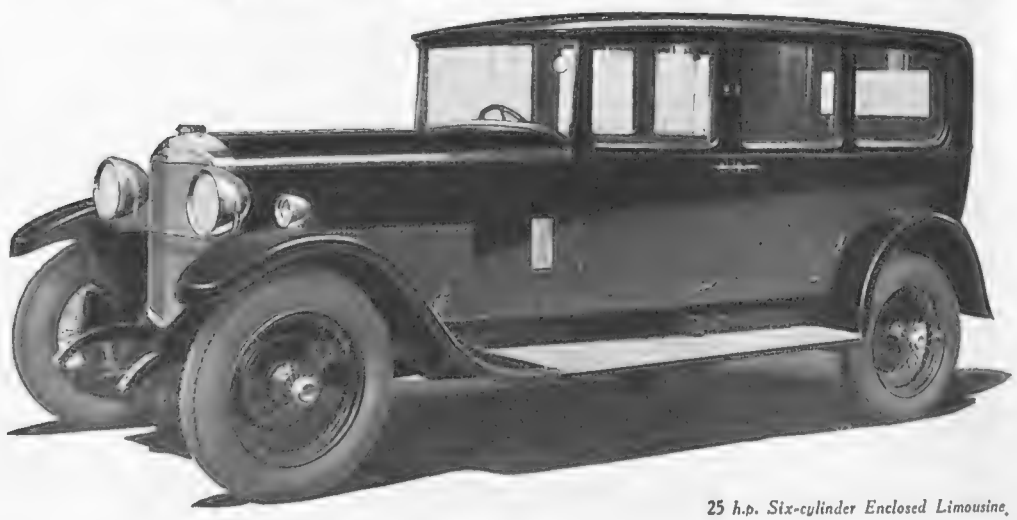

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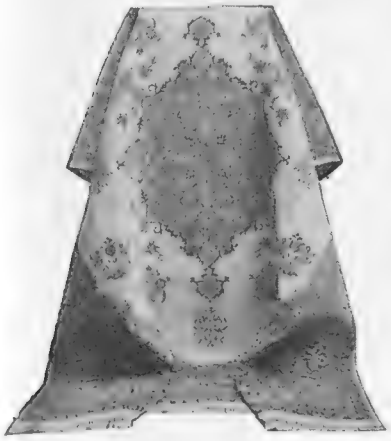

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10 6 × 6 9 ..	9 11 6	15 0 × 11 3 ..	22 16 3	19 6 × 11 3 ..	29 13 3
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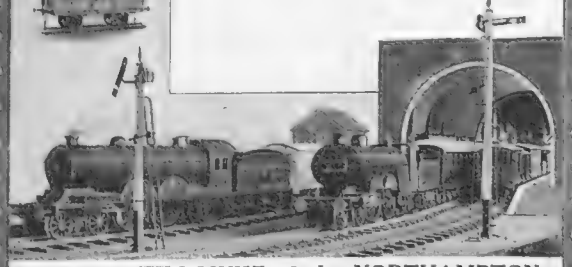

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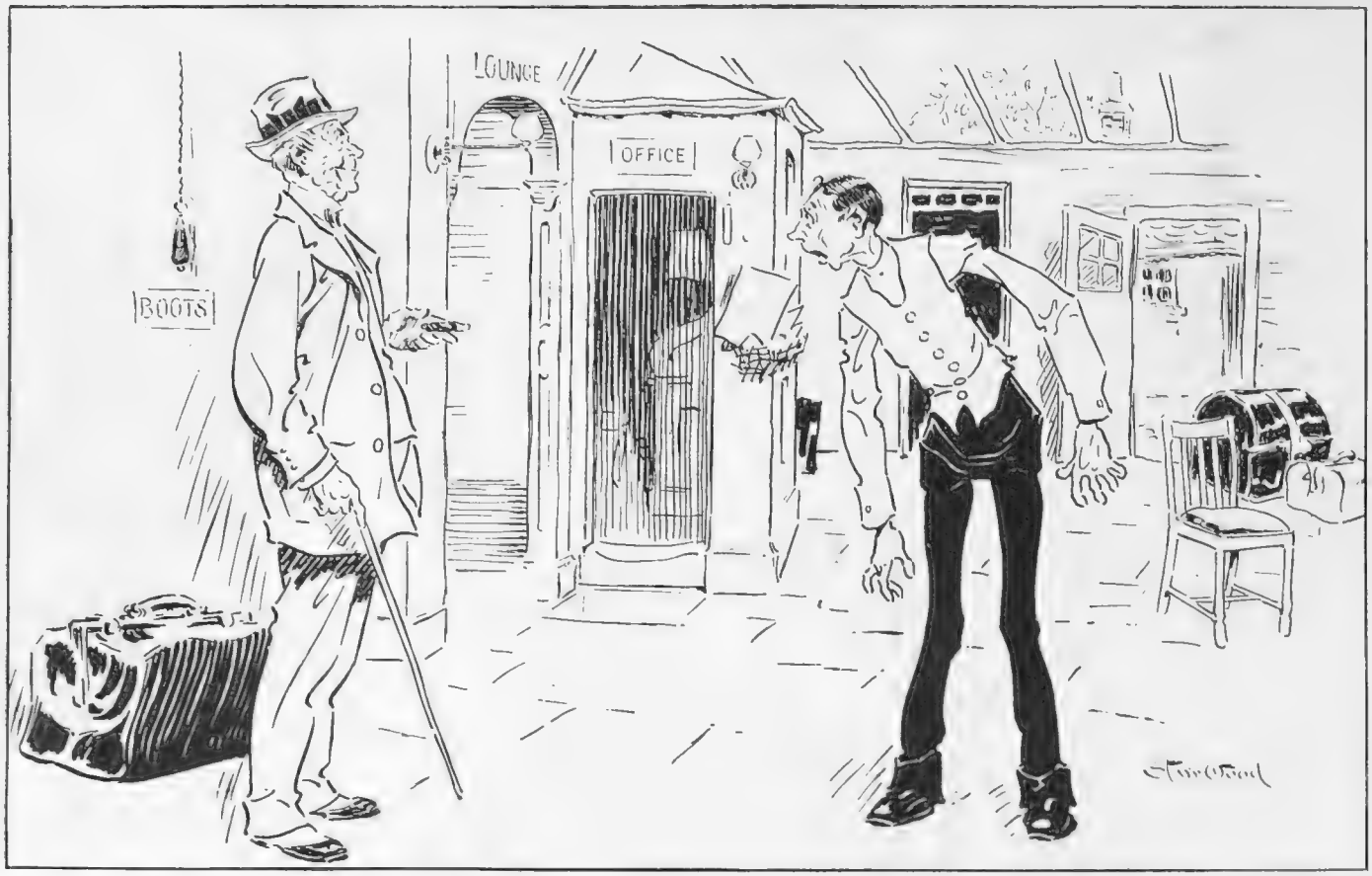

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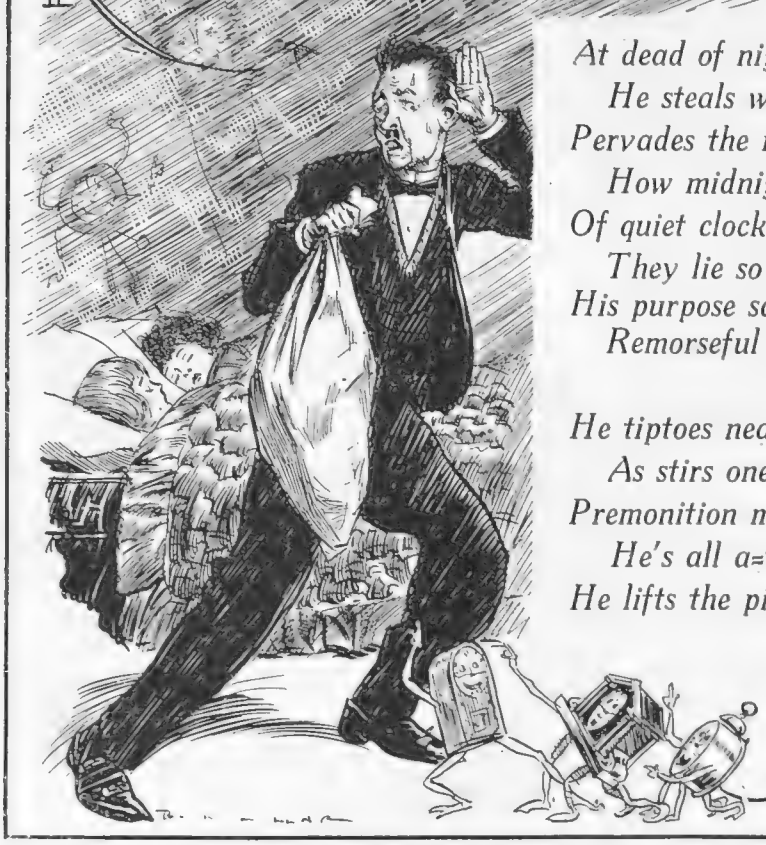

At dead of night, their chamber door unlocking,
He steals within. A weird, unearthly light
Pervades the room; his face seems ghastly white!
How midnight magnifies the tick-tick-tocking
Of quiet clocks! Almost he takes to flight,
They lie so still! His heart is loudly knocking;
His purpose scarce survives this touching sight.
Remorseful thoughts and memories come flocking,
At dead of night!
He tiptoes near, then pauses, filled with fright,
As stirs one sleepy head—perhaps some shocking
Premonition mars the dream! Unhappy plight!
He's all a-tremble, yet in Fear's despite
He lifts the pillow up and—fills each stocking,
At dead of night!

FRED. W. BAYLISS.

Illustration by H. R. MILLAR

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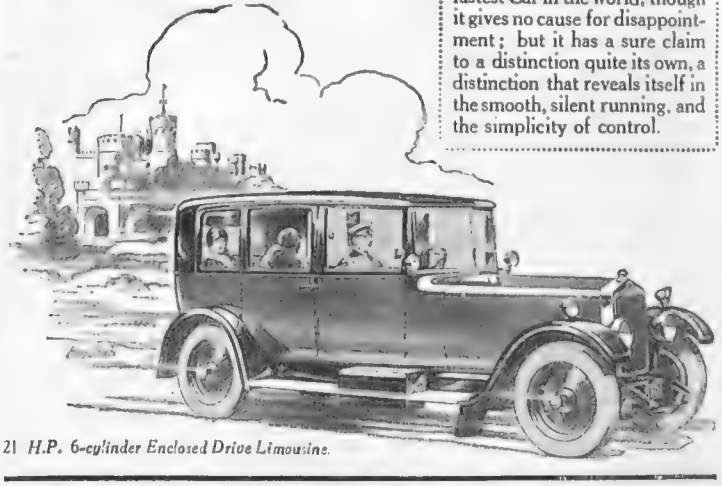

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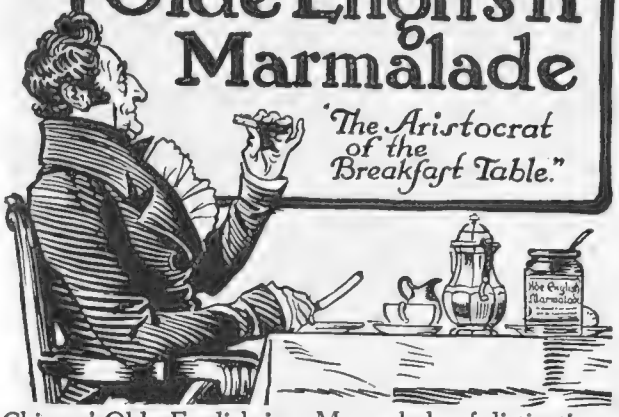
Let a British Car reflect your Pride of Ownership.

Chivers' Olde English Marmalade



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Clear Soup.
Lobster à L'Américaine.
Filets de Bœuf à la Reforme.
Roast Turkey with Chestnut Stuffing.
Ham.
New Potatoes. Spinach à la Crème.
Plum Pudding. Almond Sauce.
Melon Ice. Mince Pies.
Savoury. Croûtes of Caviare.
Dessert. Coffee. Liqueurs.

Lobster à L'Américaine

From a freshly boiled lobster remove and cut into dice sufficient meat to measure one and a half cupfuls. Into a saucepan put one slightly heaped tablespoonful of butter and one tablespoonful of minced onion, cover and cook at the side of the fire or gas until a golden brown. Stir in one tablespoonful of flour, cook for three minutes, and then add gradually one cupful of thick strained tomato, salt and paprika or cayenne to taste. Add the lobster, and cook for ten minutes very gently. Add two tablespoonfuls of sherry, and dish up.

N.B.—If this dish should be for a large party, two good-sized lobsters and the other ingredients doubled would be necessary.

Filets de Bœuf à la Reforme

Cut some fillets of beef in rounds about an inch thick, and fry them quickly in butter, in a sauté pan. Have ready some rounds of bread (fried) the same size as the fillets, place a fillet of beef on each, then a well-cooked mushroom, and a small round of fat fried crisp. Make a gravy in the pan in which the fillets have been cooked, pour round them, and serve very hot.

Chestnut Stuffing

Shell and blanch three cups of chestnuts, and cook them in boiling salted water till soft; drain them, and put them through a potato-masher. Now add ¼ cup butter or margarine, and mix it with one cup of breadcrumbs, then mix well together and put all into the turkey.

Melon Ice

One gill of cream, one melon, 4 ozs. of white sugar. Cut off the top of the melon to make a lid. Scoop out as much melon as the weight of the cream. Put this through a wire sieve. Mix with the sugar, add the whipped cream, and mix all thoroughly. Freeze, and replace it in the melon, putting on the lid with a silver skewer through it, so that it is easy to remove. Hand wafer biscuits with the melon ice.

Croûtes of Caviare

Cut some pieces of bread half an inch thick and one inch wide, hollow out from the centre a little piece, and fry a nice golden brown, and then fill up with caviare; flavour with a little lemon, butter, and a tiny dust of Nepaul pepper; put them in the oven, and serve very hot.

Manhattan Cocktail

Fill tumbler or shaker with chipped ice, put in three or four drops of Angostura bitters, add half a liqueur glassful of vermouth, half a wineglassful of whisky, stir or shake, and place a small piece of lemon on the top.

Emilia.

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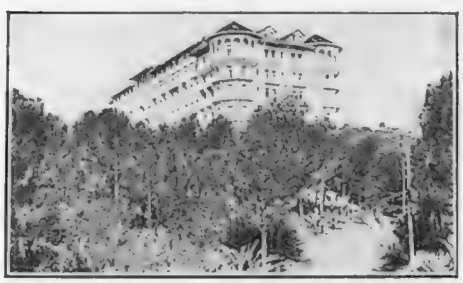

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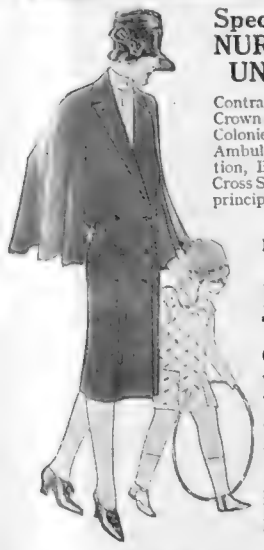

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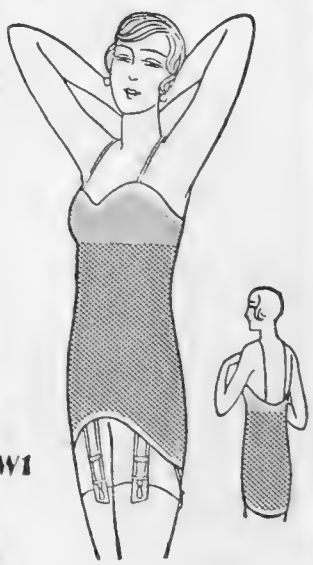
Paris smartest women wear ROUSSEL LONG BELT, though you would never know it, as it is unnoticeable under the closest fitting gown. Woven in one piece, of fine elastic, firm at the waist and light at the bust, it adjusts itself to every motion and gives you that trim line of youth. Wear it with your evening gown. Wear it for riding. Wear it for sports.



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See our latest creations at the London Branch of the ROUSSEL Paris House, or write for our descriptive illustrated booklet.

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YOU MAY ORDER IT BY MAIL
PLEASE ENCLOSE measurements of bust, waist and hips (stripped), also state your total height in inches.
STATE COLOURS: pink, coral, mauve, old rose, tango, cream, white (black 1 guinea extra).
STATE PRICE: in thread and silk 5 guineas, in pure silk 9 guineas. Abroad 3 d. in the pound extra.

Ready made Models or in 8 Days made to order.

Elizabeth Ltd.,

The House for Correct Country and Sports Clothes.

For Winter Sports, Combination skirt and knickers in waterproof coating, 5½ guineas.
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Cap to match 52/6.

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Telephone: MAYFAIR 3238.

The only Special Hospital in London for the Treatment of Cancer.

NO LETTERS. NO PAYMENTS.

Fully equipped and specially staffed for the better treatment of, and research into the causes of, Cancer. A certain number of beds are provided for advanced cases, who are kept comfortable and free from pain.

Annual Subscriptions, Donations and Legacies are earnestly solicited, and should be addressed to the Secretary.

The Cancer Hospital

Research Institute built 1910. **(FREE)** **Founded 1851.**

FULHAM ROAD, LONDON, S.W.3

Bankers: COUTTS & CO., 440 Strand. J. COURTNEY BUCHANAN, *Secretary.*

Christmas Remembrance

Hospitals, Institutions, Homes

GIVE yourself a present this Christmas! On the face of it, this may seem a rather selfish thing to do, but there are presents *and* presents! At this season, even the greatest curmudgeon finds some pleasure in adding to the enjoyment of others, how much more then, can we find pleasure in giving not only enjoyment, but the actual necessities of life to those who, through no fault of their own, may have to do without them. The best present to give oneself is the pleasure of knowing that Christmas has been made brighter for someone: these pages are intended to tell you where help is needed.

The Church Army has been carrying on its magnificent work for so many years now that we are beginning to take it for granted. This is no doubt a great compliment to the Army, but it has the danger of making people forget that the needs of the Army are as great, if not greater than they have ever been. If the many admirers of the Church Army would express their admiration in a practical form by giving even the smallest amount to help on the work its beneficent activities would be enormously increased.

The Royal Northern Group of Hospitals suggests many ways in which those who are blessed with good health can express their gratitude in a practical manner. There are four hospitals in this group, The Royal Northern Hospital, Holloway Road, The Royal Chest Hospital, City Road, The Hospital of Recovery, at "Grovelands," Southgate, and the Reckitt Convalescent Home at Clacton-on-Sea. Between them, they maintain 400 beds, and care for their patients through all stages of illness and convalescence. Donations and subscriptions may be sent to the Head Office of the group at the Royal Northern Hospital.

The fight against cancer is unceasing, and has never needed your help more than it does to-day. On these pages you will find appeals from two great organisations whose aim is to combat the disease. The Cancer Hospital in

THE LIGHT OF HEALING

Let the light of your charity this Christmas shine on the suffering poor of North London by contributing as liberally as possible to the Hospital with nearly 250,000 out-patient attendances each year.

THE

ROYAL NORTHERN HOSPITAL

HOLLOWAY, LONDON, N.7.

Cruelty to a Child at Christmastide!

Such unhappiness for child life can hardly be imagined. Yet all the year round the inspectors of the N.S.P.C.C. are busy in the work of protecting little children; during the cold winter months when food and fire are often lacking the need of their services in the drab streets of our crowded cities is even more marked. Over 3½ million children have been rescued from harmful conditions since the work commenced.

THIS GREAT NATIONAL CHARITY
URGENTLY NEEDS YOUR HELP.

Gifts gratefully received by:—
WILLIAM J. ELLIOTT, Director

The NATIONAL SOCIETY for the PREVENTION of CRUELTY to CHILDREN

Victory House, Leicester Square, W.C.2.

A SPECIAL CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR APPEAL

Blessings follow Gifts.

Over 25,560 young lives have passed through the doors of

THE SHAFTESBURY HOMES AND "ARETHUSA" TRAINING SHIP

(FOUNDED 1843)

Will YOU help us to give a chance to 25,560 more?

WE NEED FUNDS NOW.

15,291 boys and girls have been trained in the HOMES. 3,200 boys have joined the Royal Navy. 6,769 boys have joined the Mercantile Marine. 300 boys have joined the Service Bands, through the "ARETHUSA."

Patrons: THEIR MAJESTIES THE KING AND QUEEN.
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Chairman and Treasurer: FRANCIS H. CLAYTON, ESQ.
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164, SHAFTESBURY AVENUE, LONDON, W.C.2.

for Those in Need
and General Charities.

Fulham Road is the only special hospital in London for the treatment of the disease, a feature of the hospital being that a certain number of beds are provided for advanced cases, who are kept comfortable and free from pain. The Imperial Cancer Research Fund has done invaluable work in prosecuting investigations which, it is hoped, will ultimately yield results of the greatest importance on the nature and treatment of the malady. An organisation which makes an equally moving appeal this Christmas is the Royal Association in Aid of the Deaf and Dumb. A glance at their announcement on these pages will convince you of the extent of its activities.

To turn from disease to distress, we draw your attention to the work which is being done among the children of the poor. The N.S.P.C.C. naturally takes pride of place in this crusade against distress and neglect. Its name, "The Children's Champion," sums up its aims in a way which makes it unnecessary for us to enlarge on them. Thousands of boys and girls have passed through the hands of the Shaftesbury Homes and "Arethusa" Training Ship and are now leading happy and useful lives at home and in the Colonies. What more deserving cause can be imagined than to rescue them from conditions of misery and make their future assured? Every Christmas the Rev. W. Noël Lambert, of St. Gabriel's Vicarage, Poplar, makes a special appeal for gifts of money, toys, or sweets to help him to give the kiddies in the slums a happier time than they could have otherwise. Imagine Christmas without a party of some kind for the children. It is unthinkable.

Another cause which comes rather nearer home is the Society for the Assistance of Ladies in Reduced Circumstances. Its aim is to give ladies who have suffered reverses some of those little amenities of life which make their declining years less bleak and cheerless. In winter their need is great, and to help them is an act worthy of this Christmas season.

Help the Needy
to a Happy Christmas!

YOUR CHRISTMAS PARTY
TO THE POOR

YOUR **£10** will enable the Church Army to arrange a happy, helpful Christmas Dinner Party for about 120 old folk or poor children.

YOUR **£5** will give about 50 poor children or old folk an equally happy dinner party.

YOUR **10/-** will provide some needy and deserving family with a big parcel of food for a Christmas Dinner in their own home.

URGENT *Please send your gift* **NOW** *to* **THE**

CHURCH ARMY

55, BRYANSTON STREET, LONDON, W.1.

Cheques should be crossed Barclays a/c Church Army, payable to PREB. CARLILE, C.H., D.D., Hon. Chief Sec.

IMPERIAL CANCER RESEARCH FUND.

Patron—**HIS MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY THE KING**

President—**HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF BEDFORD, K.G.**

Chairman of the Executive Committee—**SIR HUMPHRY ROLLESTON, Bart, K.C.B.**

Hon. Treasurer — **SIR GEORGE MAKINS, G.C.M.G., C.B.**

Director—**DR. J. A. MURRAY, F.R.S.**

The Honorary Treasurer desires to thank those who have hitherto supported this Fund by their donations and subscriptions.

The object of the Research is for the good not only of the whole British Empire, but of the whole world.

The scope of the work embraces detailed investigation of Cancer as it occurs in the human race, and in the vertebrate animal kingdom.

Our recent researches have undoubtedly advanced our knowledge of Cancer, and it is not too much to hope that the further prosecution of the investigations will ultimately yield results of the greatest importance on the nature and treatment of the disease.

The increased working expenses make it necessary again to appeal most earnestly to the generosity of the British public.

Donations and Subscriptions may be sent to the Honorary Treasurer, **8-11, Queen Square, London, W.C.1,** or may be paid to the Westminster Bank, Marylebone Branch, 1, Stratford Place, London, W., A/c Imperial Cancer Research Fund.

Society for the Assistance of Ladies in Reduced Circumstances.

UNDER ROYAL PATRONAGE. CHRISTMAS, 1927.

CHRISTMAS will soon be with us once more, with all the work it entails—Christmas, known as the Children's Festival—but it is our privilege to administer to the old and sick and lonely. We have to see that over 200 Ladies have gifts of money—extra gifts because it is Christmas.

Then I want to suggest people kindly paying one year's rent. Think how lovely to fall asleep on Christmas night and to wake up in the morning and know your rent is paid for a year!

Then, again, every poor Lady must have coals—they must have a bright and warm Christmas—and the younger ones who work for their living must not sit in the cold. How can they work if their hands are stiff with want of a warm fire? I know it means a lot of money, but coals prevent many illnesses—bronchitis and rheumatism.

Please send your kind gifts of money as soon as possible. Wishing you a Happy Christmas,—I am, yours truly,

EDITH SMALLWOOD, HON. SEC., LANCASTER HOUSE, MALVERN.

CHRISTMAS IN THE SLUMS

As you plan **your** Merry Christmas with its round of joyous festivities and present giving, don't forget the many dwellers in Dockland Slums, for whom there will be NO Merry Christmas Party: No Toy without your aid.

Remember the kiddies, hopefully EXPECTING!

Think of the sick and lonely aged in the evening of their lives.

Respond to your heart and be a Santa Claus or Fairy Godmother to some of these.

Help us to make this a HAPPY Christmas in Slumland

MONEY TOYS SWEETS

Address: **The Rev. W. Noël Lambert, St. Gabriel's Vicarage, Poplar, E.14**

"The most desperate of Human Calamities"

DEAF & DUMB

In London alone there are 4,000. We are taking care of them. Please send a gift towards:

(1) Individual Help
Specially trained Chaplains and lay workers spend their lives among them.

(2) Rescue Home
Gives Deaf and Dumb girls who have fallen by the way a fresh start.

(3) Blind Deaf & Dumb
No more pathetic plight. Your generosity will enable them to earn a livelihood.

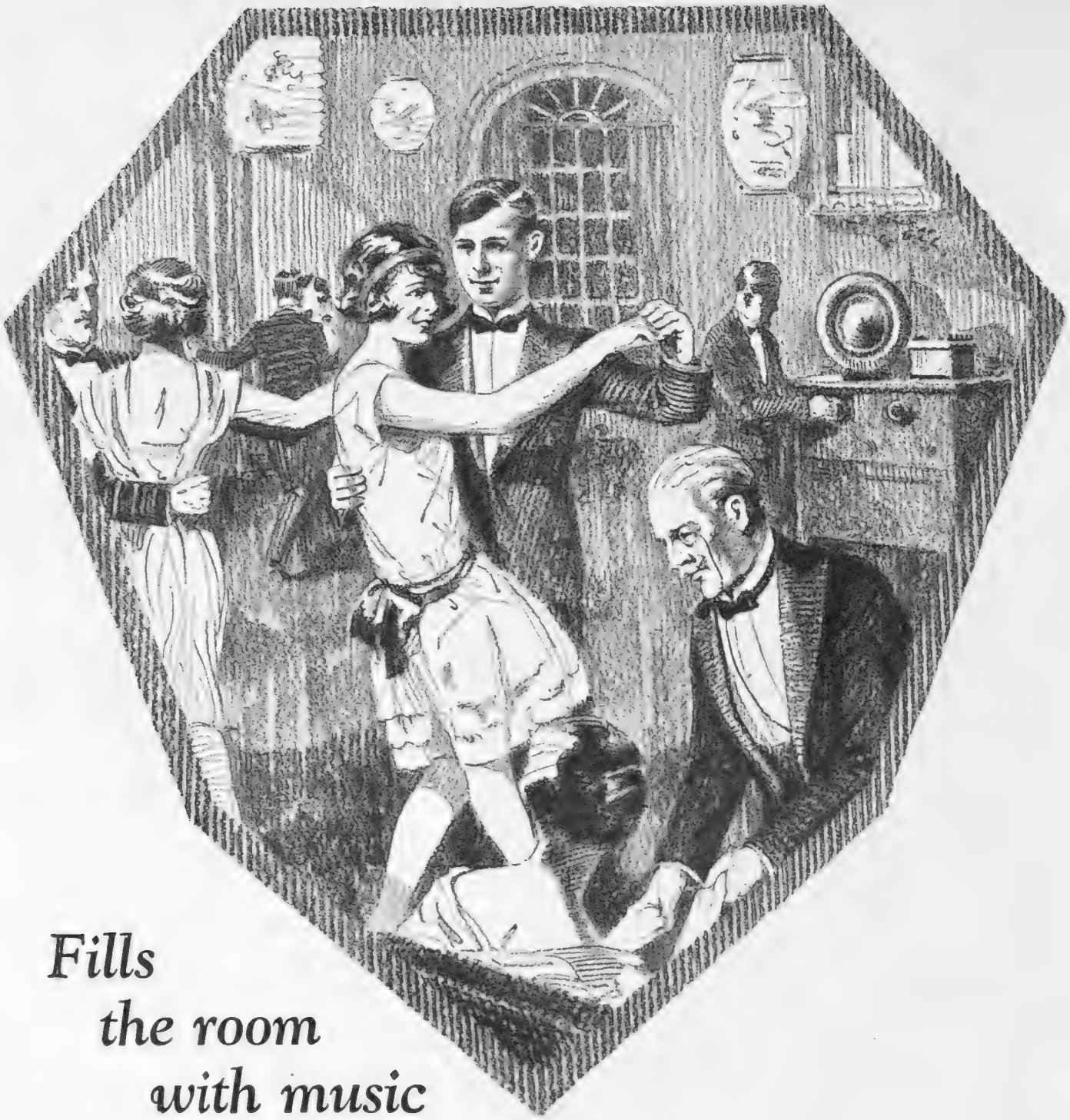
Bring a ray of sunshine to the Deaf and Dumb this Christmas.

Gifts welcomed by Graham W. Simes, Secretary.

ROYAL ASSOCIATION IN AID OF THE

DEAF & DUMB

413, Oxford Street, London, W.1.



Fills the room with music

For Xmas Dances the Mullard P.M. Speaker is essential. Every corner of the room will ring with the music and spirit of the best dance orchestras. The H.T. Unit and L.T. Battery Charger assure you of constant power.

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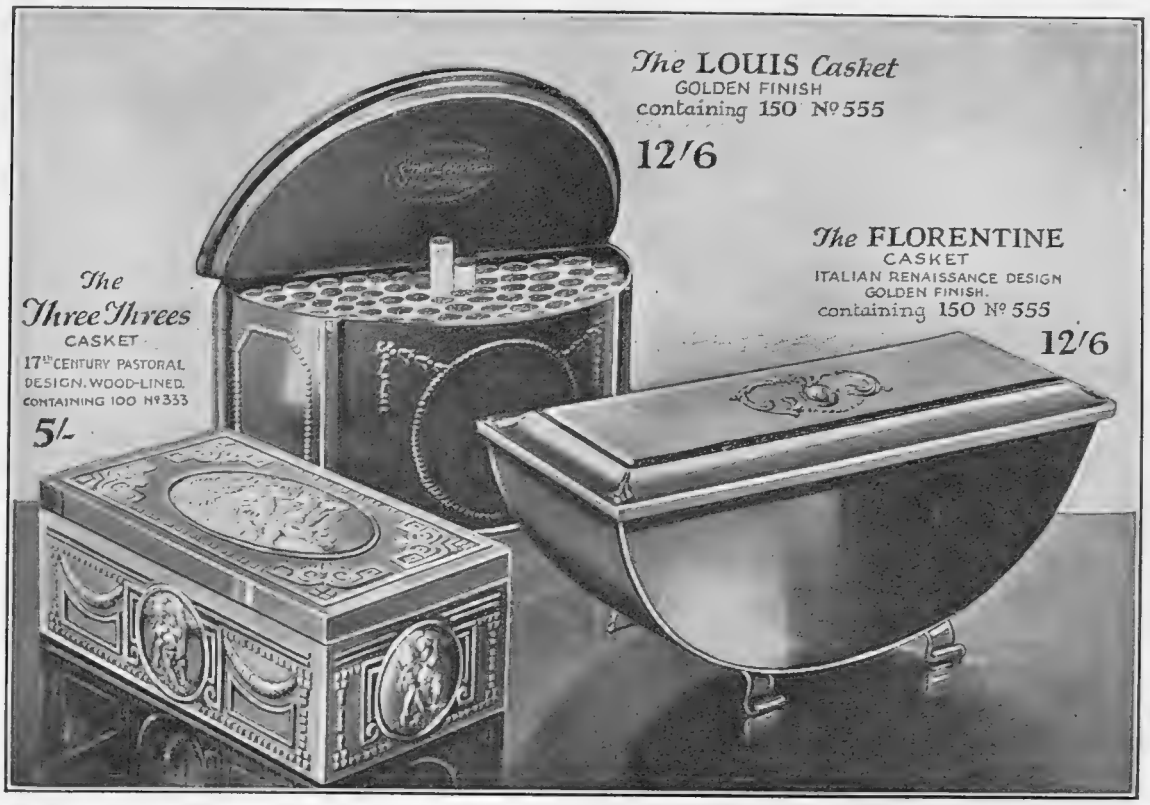

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The "Lido" Refill Cigarette Box, Engraved Metal, Antique Finish.

Containing 50 State Express No. 555 Virginia Cigarettes
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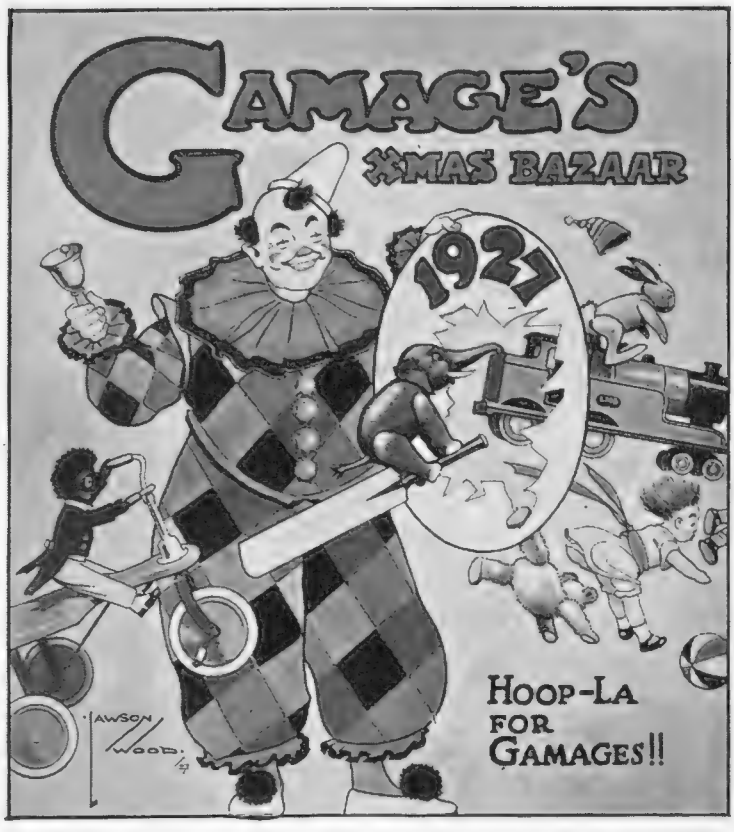
MANUFACTURED BY ARDATH TOBACCO CO., LTD., LONDON. BRITAIN'S GREATEST HIGH-CLASS CIGARETTE MANUFACTURERS.

Father Christmas's CIRCUS! COMES TO TOWN

From Park Lane to Palmers Green, in the Shires and the Suburbs, and all our best known Schools and Colleges, Boys and Girls will welcome the news. There has never been anything like it in London. Make Plans Now for YOUR Visit.



Bigger and Better than Ever!

Besides the Circus, which will be the talk of London, there's Doll Town, and the wonderful Doll's Hospital. There's the Kiddies' Motor Show extended for Christmas Season; Railway Land, Jungles, the Zoo, Mystery and Magic; Wonder Crackers. Literally Miles of Seasonable Gift Counters—and above all

SANTA CLAUS HIMSELF

GAMAGES Christmas Catalogue

tells you all about it. Over 200 Pages of Gorgeous Colour and Gift Inspiration, expensively printed in Colour and Photogravure. Regular Readers of "The Bystander" should apply early for a Copy of this wonderful Gift Book.

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"You look like a Million Dollars"

your friends will say if you are wearing

SONIA BLOOR'S AMERICAN-CUT TAILORWEAR DRESSES & COATS

as shown in

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MARTINI.
Bloor American 50/- Frock. A Two-Piece Sweater Suit in Jersey or Crepella with the perfect American-cut sleeve.

Copy of 100 dollar model.

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Sonia Bloor had the distinction of being invited to New York to design her ultra-smart creations, and now has pleasure in presenting to her English clientèle the secret of the SLIM CHARM of the AMERICAN WOMAN

Sonia Bloor has copies of her American Models

From **50/-**

She invites you to tea at four o'clock any week-day to see a Parade of these Models.

Radium v. Grey Hair

Adopt the One Sure Way to regain lost Hair-Colour.

DON'T DYE THE HAIR.

"*Caradium*" is not a Dye, not a "progressive" Dye, not a Dye or stain at all! Yet a few applications will absolutely restore your Grey Hair to its full original colour without a trace of risk, trouble or danger.

Undetectable!

Safe to use, "*Caradium*" is so gradual in action and yields such absolutely natural results that *its use cannot be detected.* Whatever the cause of your greyness, or however longstanding it may be, "*Caradium*" will cure it. The Radio-active water from which "*Caradium*" is prepared is the secret of its wonderful restorative and vitalising properties, and no substitute can give you "*Caradium*" results. Unsolicited testimony from users of "*Caradium*" in every walk of life continues to reach us.

Special Hair Book sent gratis on request.

Caradium HAIR RESTORER

"*Caradium*" is obtainable of Harrods, Whiteleys, Selfridges (Hairdressing), Army & Navy Stores, Boots, etc., or direct in plain package (post 6d. extra) **7/6**

CARADIUM (Regd.), 174 New Bond Street, London, W.1

GLOVE SILK Lingerie

made by the famous firm of Van Raalte of America.

"Glove Silk" is an exceptionally fine pure silk milanese of an exceeding softness with no bulk whatever. It is the ideal Lingerie for comfort and washes with the greatest ease. The nightdress illustrated has a yoke of very fine tucked net with pipings of glove silk. Finished at shoulders with cross over ribbon straps. In peach colour only.

PRICE **47/6**

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WHY REMAIN GREY?

How Society Men and Women Re-create their Hair's Lost Colour.

FREE TREATISE.

How Society men and women guard against the social and business handicap of Grey Hair is revealed in a dainty little Boudoir Book just published.

This book will not take you ten minutes to read, yet it discloses the secret by which you can grow glossy, abundant, and silken hair, and—most important of all—preserve it from the greying and disfiguring touch of Time by the one treatment endorsed by the Press.

THE FOLLY OF DYES.

Dyes and artificial hair paints are, of course, strictly tabooed by men and women of refinement. This is not only good taste, but good sense as well. Dyed hair is always conspicuous. It literally shouts the embarrassing information that its colour came out of a bottle. Further, dye ruins the hair's structure and health, rots it away, and causes it to fall out.

There is only one satisfactory method of curing greyness and hair loss of colour. This is to re-create, naturally, your hair's real colour from root to tip. You will find how to do this between the gold and ivorine covers of the book mentioned above.

Remarkable results follow this method.

Right from the first your hair becomes less and less grey.

No matter how long the greyness has existed, the lost colour is restored.

You can easily prove this. When the colour has been restored, just wash your hair and scrub it as hard as you can. Not a speck of colour comes away. This is because the colour is part of the very structure of your hair, and not a dye or stain.

IMPROVES HAIR HEALTH & BEAUTY

Besides restoring the lost colour, this treatment improves and tones up your hair in every way.

It removes all accumulations of Scurf or Dandruff.

It invigorates and vitalises the hair and promotes a strong luxuriant growth.

It prevents the hair falling out and baldness.

Finally, by restoring your hair to exactly the same shade and depth of colour as it possessed before it became faded, dull or grey, it makes you look years younger and even takes as much as 10 to 15 years from your apparent age.

The one Method Endorsed by the Press.

"THE QUEEN" (and "COURT CHRONICLE") says:

"'Facktative' certainly is admirable in its results. Its effects are permanent, it is delightfully clean and easy to use."—"There are other points which commend it; its admirable effects upon the general health and condition of the hair, and so on; but it is in its wonderful powers of restoring the actual colour to the hair that its chief interest lies."

"SUNDAY TIMES" says:

"'Facktative' is nature's own remedy, and of its efficacy one can scarcely speak sufficiently in praise ... I have personally used this restorative ... I can myself testify to the truth of all it professes to accomplish."—HYGEIA (Editress "Secrets of Health and Beauty").

Space forbids but a few brief extracts only but accompanying the free Boudoir Book is sent full, independent, and spontaneous testimony which the sterling merits of "Facktative" have called forth from these and numerous other authorities from all parts. Readers should write to-day to the "FACKTATIVE" Co. (Suite 76), 66 Victoria Street, Westminster, London, S.W.1, for a free treatise, which will be sent post free in plain sealed envelope.

BOOK OF HAIR-HEALTH AND BEAUTY FREE.

Should you be troubled with white, grey, greying, faded or otherwise discoloured hair you should write to-day to the "FACKTATIVE" Co. (Suite 76), 66, Victoria Street, Westminster, London, S.W.1, for a copy of their book describing how to cure grey or faded hair without the use of dye or stains.

Just mention your address and a copy of this book will reach you by return, gratis and post free, in plain sealed envelope, free from observation.

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1927

A sensible gift for the sensible man

"Luvisca"
REGISTERED
that's the stuff!

EVERY man who has worn "LUVISCA" SHIRTS, PYJAMAS and SOFT COLLARS will welcome them for their cut, style, service, comfort and durability. There is a large range of refined patterns from which to choose.

IF any difficulty in obtaining "LUVISCA" Shirts, Pyjamas and Soft Collars, write Courtaulds, Ltd. (Dept. 8M), 16, St. Martin's-le-Grand, London, E.C.1, who will send you name of nearest retailer and descriptive booklet.

Look for the Registered Tab. **None Genuine Without.**

"Luvisca"
SHIRTS
PYJAMAS & SOFT COLLARS

Xmas Gifts at Vickery's

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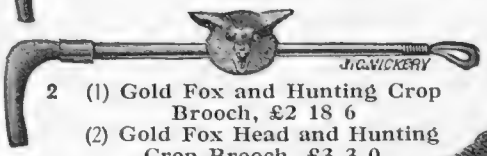

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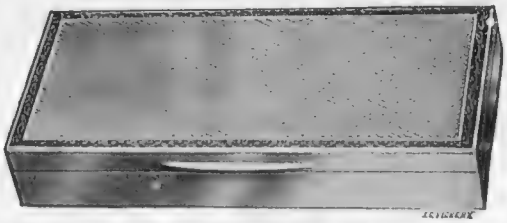

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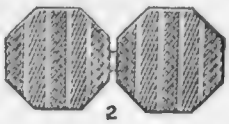

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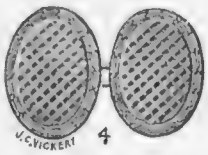

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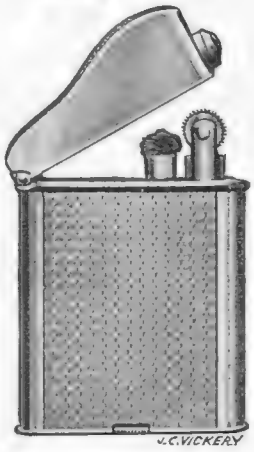

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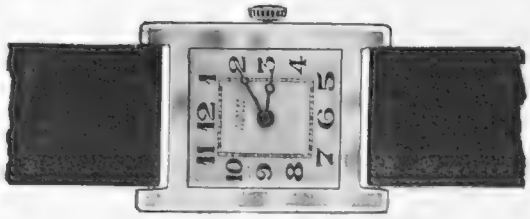
"DEAREST"
A Circle of Gems forming the word "Dearest."
£15 15 0



L216.—Solid Gold Wrist Watch.
Special value.
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Catalogue post free.

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No Daintier Coiffure than a "La Merveilleuse" Shingled Transformation

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PERMANENT STEAM WAVING

By the latest scientific method, in which no electric heaters are used.

Charges from 2 to 6 Gns.

A Painless Process with a most Fascinating Result.

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which afforded the most pleasure came from —

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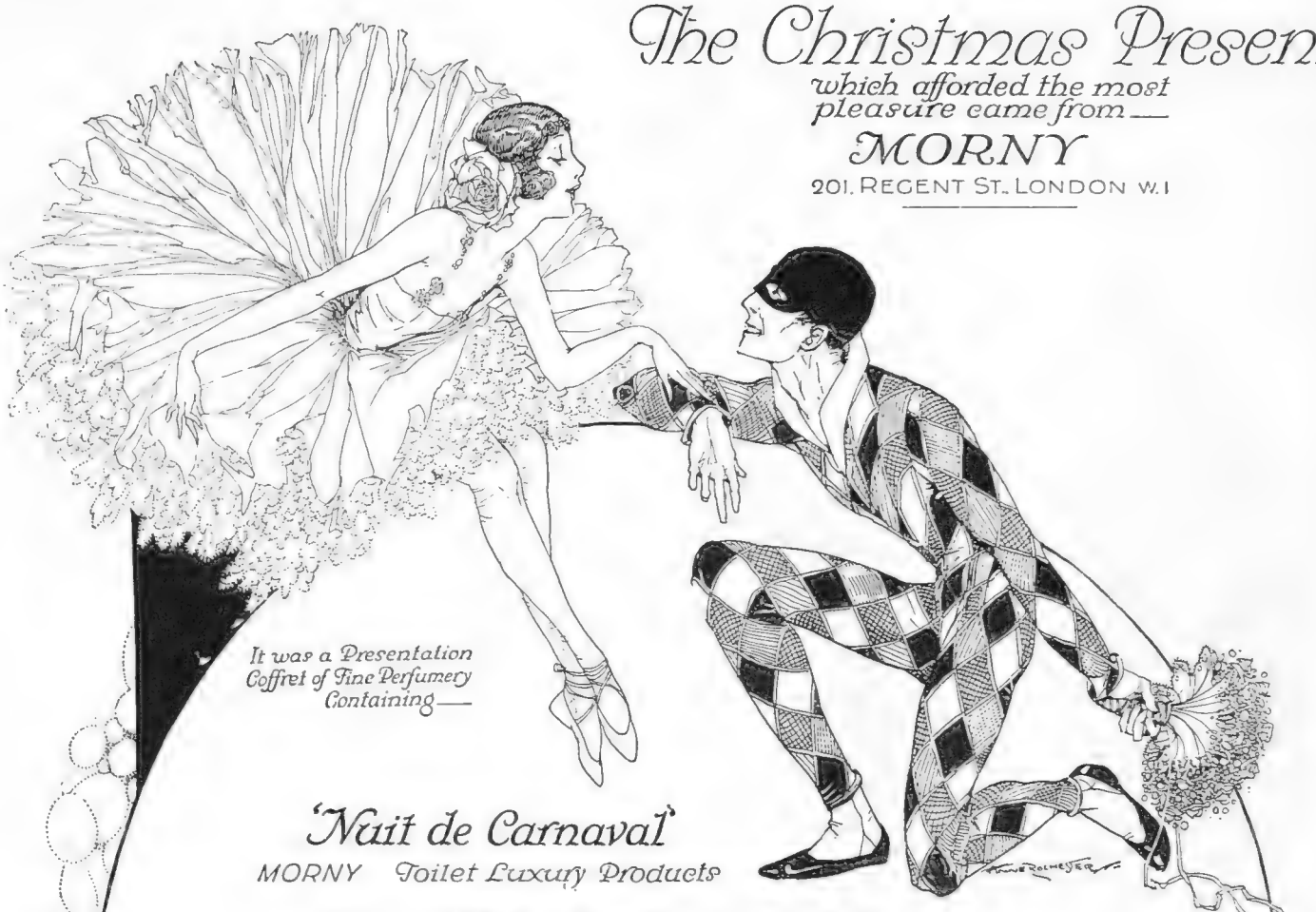

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'Nuit de Carnaval'

MORNY Toilet Luxury Products

The MORNY "Six-Products" Coffret.

Gold canvas embossed or gold edged antique brown coverings (size 7¾in. × 5in. × 2⅝in.).

A Stoppered Crystal Bottle of Perfume (2 oz.).
A Standard size Carton of Complexion Powder.
A Patent Sifter Box (for handbag) of Complexion Powder.
A Tablet (toilet size) of Savon de Toilette, in Carton.
A Gilt-Capped Bottle of Poudre à Sachet and
Bath Salt Tablets (4) in ribbon tied packet.

Price 45/-

Coffrets containing the same assortment of Products are also available perfumed.
"Chaminade" or "Mystérieuse" 36/-
"Fantaisie" or "Sérénade" 25/6
and "June Roses" 25/-

From your usual retailer, or direct (enclosing amount and postage) from MORNY FRÈRES Ltd.

To Santa Claus everywhere —

make it a real
CHRISTMAS-DE-LUXE
—give them

Mackintosh's Toffee & Chocolates

You will find in every Confectioner's Shop a large range of

Mackintosh's Toffee & Chocolates
(IN DECORATED TINS AND FANCY BOXES)

Ask particularly to see—
"BOUQUET" CHOCOLATES
in the delightful Satin Top Boxes 1lb & 2lbs—and

Mackintosh's Christmas Assortment
18 VARIETIES OF TOFFEES, CHOCOLATES ETC.

Choose "Mackintosh's" for your Gift-de-Luxe

Young's

MOUNTAIN DEW

"QUALITY FIRST"

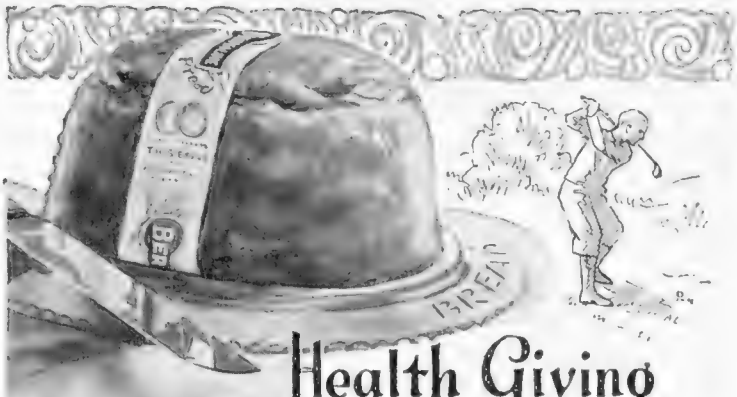
has been the motto of the firm since 1797. Young's Mountain Dew possesses a distinctive aroma, style and mellowness which have secured it a leading position in most markets throughout the world.

Awarded Grand Prix, Brussels, 1926. Highest Award Nice, 1927.

Edw. Young & Co. Ltd.
Glasgow. London & Liverpool.

Glenugie Distillery, Peterhead, Aberdeenshire. Head Export Office - 62, Mark Lane, London.

Quality First Since 1797



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Good health is dependent on good, pure food. Your bread, particularly, must be wholesome, health-giving, health-preserving, and no other combines these essentials in so high a degree as "Bermaline"—the Ideal Wheaten Malt Bread—baked with the choicest Wheat Flour—pure and free from preservatives—the bread for every day and all occasions. Start with "Bermaline" to-day; you'll appreciate the difference. A slice of "Bermaline" is more nutritious than any other.

All good Bakers bake "Bermaline." Yours can supply you. If not, write: Montgomerie & Co., Ltd., "Bermaline" Factory, Ibrox, Glasgow, for name of your nearest "Bermaline" Baker

Bermaline

The Ideal Wheaten Malt Bread

UNDER ROYAL PATRONAGE.

Myosotis

EXCLUSIVE BEAUTY PREPARATIONS

LEMON CREAM

COMBINES THE REFRESHING FRAGRANCE OF AN ENGLISH SPRING-TIDE WITH THE SOOTHING SOFTNESS OF THE SOUTHERN WINDS.

IN JARS—4/6
7/6
12/6
21/-

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SEVEN HANOVER SQUARE
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The Symbol of Perfection.

A "La Naturelle" Transformation will make a striking improvement in your personal appearance.

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is an absolute necessity for the HAIR

No other preparation preserves, beautifies, and nourishes it so effectually. Prepared in a Golden Colour for Fair Hair.

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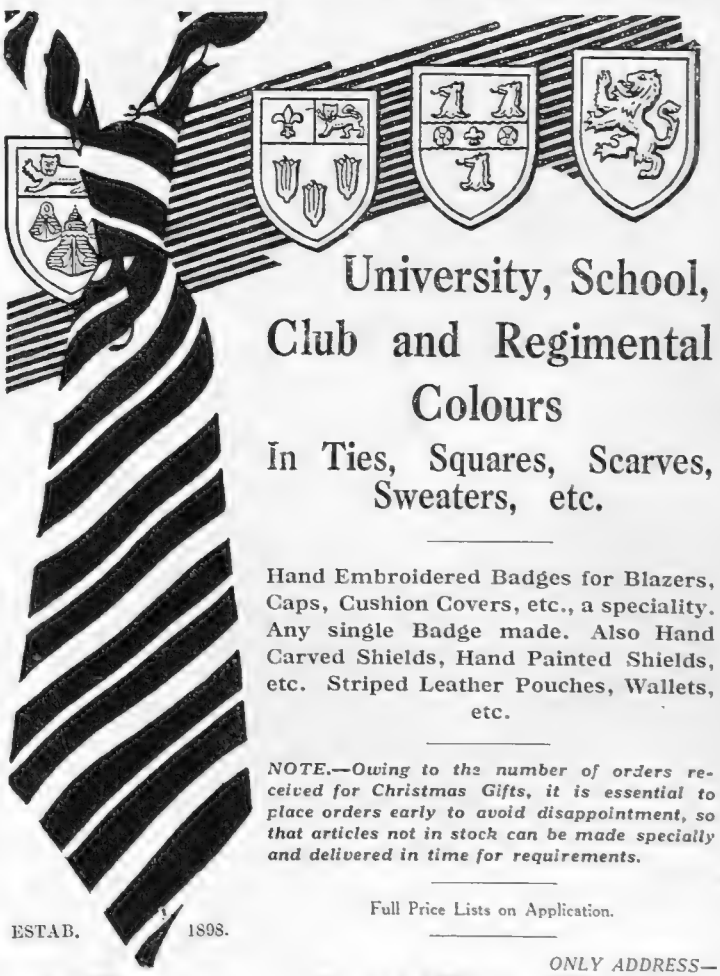

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A smart Jacket Suit in good quality velveteen, designed as a party suit for boys at the intermediate age. In Black with White Waistcoat, and Brown with Champagne Waistcoat. To fit 5 to 8 years.
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Exquisite little silk taffeta dress trimmed with small frills and fine tucks. Finished at waist with roses of self silk. In blue, rose, mauve, and green For 2 to 6 years.
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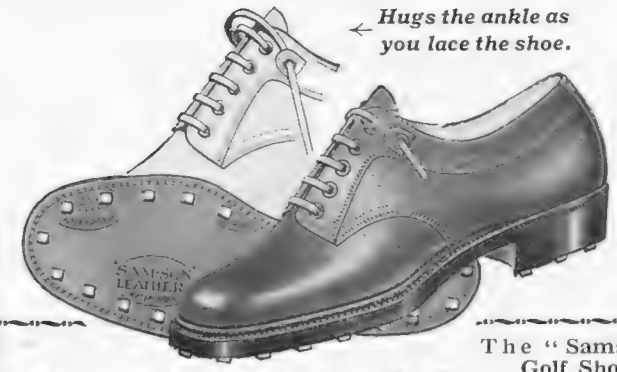

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The "Samson" Golf Shoe.
(Model No. BY.)

Cut from waterproof grain calfskin and gorse calf. Samson waterproof soles. Fitted with special ankle grip. Nailed the new way which adds lightness to the shoe and a firmer stance for golf wear.

Ladies' . . **35/-**
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A dainty pair of ladies' or children's cosy slippers with goods to the value of 25/- and over bought in December

Trust the man behind the boot.

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WITH COMFORT AND ECONOMY
WHEN AN ANTHRACITE STOVE IS USED

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SPECIAL OFFER for 14 days only
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Vide Testimonial. SOLIHULL, *Sept. 15th, 1927.*

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Every device for getting professional accuracy and variety with amateur ease is provided in Filmo equipment.

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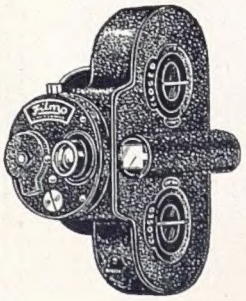
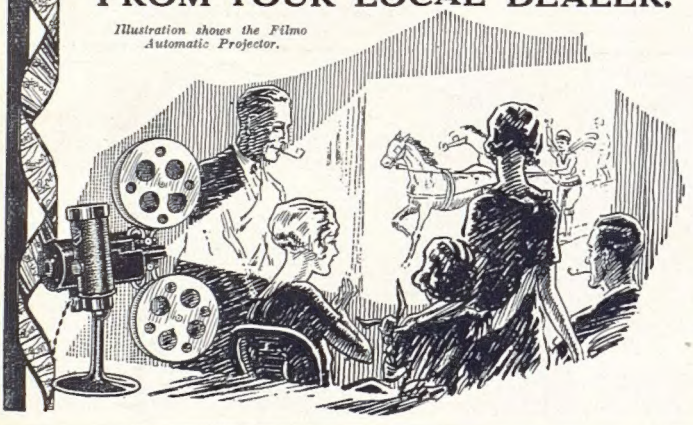


Illustration shows the Filmo Automatic Projector.



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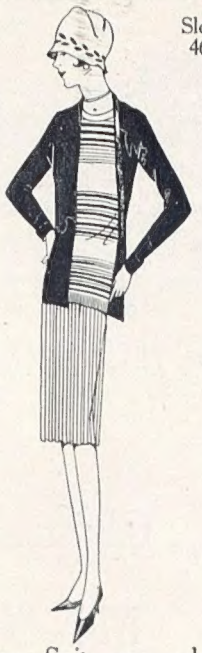

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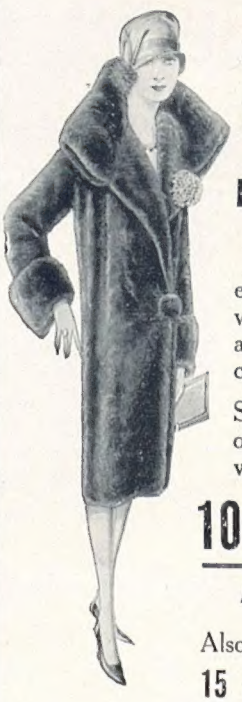

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